MY FAVORITE WIFE

by

Bella and Sam Spewack

FADE IN

INT. COURTROOM CORRIDOR - DAY

1 MED. SHOT - Visible on the door of the courtroom is a sign which reads: "COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS, JUDGE WALTER BRYSON PRESIDING." The door opens as spectator exits. The CAMERA, as if to take advantage of the opening of the door, PASSES THROUGH into the courtroom.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

2 MED. LONG SHOT - a group of people are assembled about the Judge's bench.

CLERK
Are the parties ready in the matter of Ellen Wagstaff Arden?

CAMERA QUICKLY TRUCKS IN, identifying Nick and Bianca. They are engrossed in each other.

CLERK'S VOICE (cont'd)
The matter of Ellen Wagstaff Arden.

NICK
Present.

Nick rises and approaches the bar. He still holds Bianca's hand. With confidence, he drops her hand and approaches the bar.

JUDGE
Just a moment!

The Judge is a rather fussy and irritable gentleman, victim of the judicial kidney disease. He signals to clerk as he rattles papers.

2a CLOSE SHOT - the Judge and the Clerk, whispering.

JUDGE
Wasn't I supposed to marry somebody?

CLERK
Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE
Let's get it over with.
(rattles papers)
This can wait. Looks like a very complicated case to me This Arden matter.

CLERK
But, Your Honor --

2b MED. CLOSE SHOT - The judge, Nicky and the clerk.

JUDGE
(~~as he turns to Nick, in normal voice~~)
~~Y~~ou want to get married?

NICK
Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE
Got a bride?

2c MED. LONG SHOT.

BIANCA
(~~rising~~)
Yes, Your Honor.

2d TWO SHOT - Judge and Nicky.

JUDGE
Witnesses? License? Ring?

(CONTINUED)

NICK
Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE
Then what are we waiting for?

3 MED. CLOSE SHOT.

CLERK
(whispering)
Arden versus Arden.

NICK
If Your Honor please --

The Clerk is still whispering into Judge's ear but out of this mumble-jumble Nick is introduced and the Judge is informed that Nick's is the current case on the docket.

JUDGE
Just a moment...
(then, as whispering continues)
What? What?

He stares over at Nicky, looks at the papers before him, continues to stare over at Nicky. The look doesn't phase Nick, he glances confidently back at the Judge.

JUDGE (cont'd)
What? Who's dead?

Clerk continues whispering.

(CONTINUED)

3 (CONTINUED)

JUDGE (cont'd)
That's sad ... very sad ...

NICK
If Your Honor please ---

JUDGE
(studying the papers)
Mr. Arden, as I understand it, your wife, Ellen Wagstaff Arden, was a member of an antropological expedition shipwrecked off the coast of Indo-China.

NICK
Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE
What was she doing on an expedition?
(~~looks at papers~~)
Mother of two infant children!
(~~looks up~~)
That correct?

4 CLOSE SHOT - Nick.

NICK
Yes, Your Honor. I know I shouldn't have let her go.
(~~he swallows as he looks at Bianca. Then, hastily~~)
You'll find the circumstances set forth in my brief, Your Honor.

JUDGE
(mumbling over ~~brief~~)
The said Ellen Wagstaff Arden was engaged as photographer for a period of three months ---

(CONTINUED)

NICK
Yes, we were both supposed to go but, at the last moment, I was involved in a case, and I couldn't leave. We talked it over and finally decided she ought to go anyway. She needed a change. She'd had a hard time with the children. Teething.

5 FLASH - Bianca watches, a little bored. She takes out compact.

6 MED. CLOSE SHOT.

JUDGE
Just the facts, just the facts... You're a lawyer, stick to the facts.,

NICK
They're in my brief, sir.

JUDGE
Well, let me read it. Don't keep interrupting!

NICK
Yes, Your Honor.

7 MED. CLOSE SHOT - Bianca, as the Judge mumbles, has her compact out, and is adjusting her lips. The light from the window is reflected in the mirror and is projected directly into the Judge's eyes.

8 MED. CLOSE SHOT.

JUDGE
(shielding his eyes, and not aware of the source of his discomfort)
And when did you say the ship went down?

(CONTINUED)

NICK
September 3rd, 1932 ... It's on page seven, I believe.

JUDGE
(shielding his eyes)
That's right ... Here it is ... Can't see...last seen entering one of the life boats, when a wave ... Very sad ... very sad...
(blinks, looks up, roars)
YOU!

NICK
Pardon?

JUDGE
You! Young woman, what do you think you're doing? Put that confounded mirror away. Do you want to blind me?

BIANCA
(stiffly)
I'm very sorry.

JUDGE
Ought to wash your face instead of painting it ... There's such a thing as contempt of court.
(growling)
Urmph ... Where was I?
(rattles the papers)
Where was I?

NICK
Page seven ... the shipwreck.

JUDGE
Don't interrupt me... Do you hear? Don't interrupt me...
(stares at the paper)
And what efforts did you make to trace the whereabouts of your wife, eh?

NICK
Page eight... I went to Bankok and interviewed all available survivors...

JUDGE and NICK
(simultaneously)
--- who agreed that the said Ellen Wagstaff Arden had been swept overboard before aid could reach her. Depositions appended.

JUDGE
Quiet!

NICK
Yes, sir. I'd like to explain...

The Judge again looks at the long, wordy, legal document before him. He thumbs it hastily, then decides he would rather not go into it again.

JUDGE
Nothing to explain...
(indicates papers)
Testimony is here. Sworn affidavits. No evidence to the contrary. Law is clear.
(bangs gavel)
I hereby pronounce Ellen Wagstaff Arden legally dead... Wasn't I supposed to marry somebody?

NICK
Yes, sir. Us.

Bianca, meanwhile, has come up to take Nick's arm.

JUDGE
(astounded)
Eh?
(his eyes fasten on Bianca; his eyes go to Nick)
My dear young man, are you going to marry <u>again</u>?

NICK
Yes, sir.

JUDGE
Have you had time to think about it?

NICK
Well -- yes, sir.
(looks at Bianca)

BIANCA
Your Honor, Mr. Arden is over twenty-one.

NICK
Now, Bianca ---

JUDGE
You sure you don't want more time -- to think about it? Marriage is a very serious step. You seem a very nice young man --

Bianca is ready to burst.

JUDGE (cont'd)
--- and quite an able lawyer. Your brief was very well prepared. Are you SURE -- quite sure -- you want to marry this woman?

NICK
(swallows)
Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE
(gloomily)
Well, all right...

He begins to read the marriage ceremony in a doleful voice, shaking his head as he does so.

DISSOLVE

EXT. STREET - DAY

9 This is the street and exterior of the Arden home. Identifiable on the front lawn is a mailbox which reads, "N. ARDEN." Truck pulling up to substantial suburban house. We can see the letters: "U.S. Coast Guard," and a group of sailors squatting in it. Gracefully, one of the raincoated figures vaults to the street. Then we realize the figure is a woman. In fact, it's Ellen Arden.

(CONTINUED)

Simultaneously, the truck roars off, as they wave. She stares up at the house.

10 TRUCKING SHOT - as Ellen moves slowly toward the house, she hears the voices of children playing. She stops, and looks off in the direction of the swimming pool. She moves off towards the pool.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - ARDEN HOUSE - DAY

11 MED. LONG SHOT - children are engaged in pushing two small boats as they swim around the pool.

12 CLOSEUP - of Ellen as she stares at the children she has not seen for seven years. Chinch is a girl of about nine, who wears a formative brace on her teeth, and Timmy a boy of about ten.

13 MED. CLOSE SHOT.

ELLEN
(finally)
Hello.

TIM
(eyeing her tentatively)
Hello.

He climbs out of pool and shakes himself. Chinch, too, gets out.

ELLEN
Hello.

CHINCH
(just as suspicious of her as Tim)
Hello.

14 THREE SHOT - as Ellen moves to them instinctively and wipes their noses.

CHINCH
(looking at her curious garb)
Are you a lady or a man?

ELLEN
(self-consciously - looking at her pea jacket and pants)
Used to be a lady.

15 CLOSE SHOT - Chinch and Tim still staring suspiciously at Ellen.

TIM
Are you a sailor?

CHINCH
(doubtfully)
A lady sailor?
(giggles)

TIM
(proudly)
My mother went down in a shipwreck.

16 MED. CLOSE SHOT.

CHINCH
He's always boasting.

TIM
I am not boasting. My mother got drowned in the Pacific Ocean. We're not supposed to know.

17 FLASH - Ellen, as she gulps.

18 MED. SHOT - There is a garden wall in the b.g.

ELLEN
(finally)
Did you miss her a great deal?

TIM
Oh, sure.

He starts to climb up on the stone wall.

ELLEN
(flutteringly)
Would you like to have her back?

(CONTINUED)

18 (CONTINUED)

TIM
(still climbing - casually)
Can't have her back. She's drowned.
(he has finally reached the top of the wall)
I'm a tight-rope walker.

CHINCH
We put flowers on her grave every Easter, with Daddy.

ELLEN
(touched)
You do?

CHINCH
And then Daddy buys us hamburgers and root beer.

Ellen nods grimly and notices the braces on Chinch's teeth. She unconsciously screws her face up in imitation of Chinch.

ELLEN
Do you mind those?

(CONTINUED)

18 (CONTINUED)

CHINCH
Yes, I do.

TIM
Daddy said he didn't want her to look like a moose when she grew up.

At this moment, a dog comes barking from porch. He goes to Ellen. He recognizes her. He whines. He goes mad, running in circles.

CHINCH
He never acts that way with strangers.

ELLEN
(patting the dog)
My! Haven't you gotten fat!

CHINCH
Sure he's fat. He's old - he's as old as me.
(spying her brother as he balances himself)
Oh, look at Timmy!

ELLEN
Timothy Arden, will you please get off that wall?

TIM
Try and make me.

As she moves for him, he loses his balance and topples.

19 CLOSE SHOT - Tim on the ground, as Ellen rushes in to him.

ELLEN
Oh, Timmy, you've hurt yourself. How could you?

She bends over him, takes him in her arms and kisses him.

(CONTINUED)

19 (CONTINUED)

TIM
(enraged)
Leggo! Leggo of me!

He struggles out of her arms, as Chirch enters scene.

20 The three

ELLEN
I'm sorry.

Tim moves away as he glares at her. The dog is still sniffing around Ellen's feet.

TIM
C'mon, Grover ... get away from her ... C'mon, Grover. Grover, do as I tell you. Grover, where's your discipline?
(then politely to Ellen)
Pardon me. We're not allowed to talk to strangers.

He dives into the pool. Ellen turns to girl.

(CONTINUED)

20 (CONTINUED)

ELLEN
Is your grandmother in?

CHINCH
(as she dives in after Tim)
Pardon me. We're not allowed to talk to strangers.

Ellen watches the children, who whoop. Then she turns slowly toward the porch.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

21 As Ellen enters. The children's voices can be heard dimly. She looks about, then walks toward the entrance of the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

22 MED. SHOT - as Ellen enters and sees a decanter of whiskey on bar. The bar is of the hidden wall type, when a button is pressed, a wall descends, completely concealing it. She gets a glass and the decanter of whiskey and walks across the living room with them, toward the sun room. In b.g. standing in the sun room are Ma and Philip. He is the Filipino houseboy-chauffeur. At the moment, he is garbed in his chauffeur outfit.

MA
(to Philip)
--- and I want you to pick up some flowers for the bedrooms.

PHILIP
Any particular kind?

MA
I think she likes tea roses.

He turns and exits.

23 SHOOTING toward door. While this conversation is going on, Ellen pours out whiskey. Ma turns around, still muttering to herself, then sees Ellen.

(CONTINUED)

23 (CONTINUED)

MA
Yes, what is it?
(she stares at Ellen)

ELLEN
(bracing herself)
Hello, darling.

MA
Ellen ... Good heaven's ... Ellen!

Ellen moves toward her as she crumples up.

24 TWO SHOT.

ELLEN
(gives Ma the drink - Ma's eyes flutter)
All right now?

Ellen finishes the rest of the drink herself.

25 MED. CLOSE SHOT - Ellen helps Ma to a chair.

MA
I can't believe it. I just can't believe it ... When? .. How? .. Where've you been? All these years! It just isn't possible.
(touches Ellen's face)
Is it really you, Ellen?

ELLEN
It is ...
(she kisses her)
And how's Nicky?

MA
(remembering the wedding)
Nicky?

(CONTINUED)

25 (CONTINUED)

ELLEN
You know - your son. My husband. He's all right, isn't he?

MA
Oh, yes. Nicky's fine - fine. Had a little trouble with his wisdom tooth.

ELLEN
The same one?

MA
It's out.

ELLEN
May I have a bath, Mother?

MA
Why, of course.

26 MED. TRUCKING SHOT - as Ellen walks toward stairway, followed by Ma.

MA
Ellen - where have you <u>been</u>?

ELLEN
Latitude 12, longitude 128 - and I'd still be there if a Portugese freighter hadn't wandered two hundred miles off its course.

MA
But why didn't you write?

ELLEN
I didn't have a pencil.

MA
But why didn't you wireless from the boat?

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN
Didn't have a wireless...very small freighter...very dirty.

MA
Honestly, I don't know where to begin. I'm so confused.

ELLEN
By the way, how was my funeral?

MA
Lovely...Doctor Blake preached a wonderful sermon.

ELLEN
I wish I'd been there.

DISSOLVE

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

27 Ellen is standing in a mist-covered shower. Ma is beside her. They talk over the noise of the water.

ELLEN
(over sound of water)
This is wonderful... First hot bath in seven years! Tell me about Nick. Handsome as ever?

MA
I think so.

ELLEN
Prosperous?

MA
Oh, yes.

ELLEN
Where is he? Still at the office?

Ellen turns off the water. CAMERA PANS to Ma.

(CONTINUED)

27 (CONTINUED)

MA
(looking off scene)
Why, Ellen, you're all brown.

Ellen hums gaily off scene. Ma swallows. She braces herself.

MA (cont'd)
Ellen - I've got something to tell you. Nick's married again.

Ellen stops humming. CAMERA MOVES to take in the two.

ELLEN
(wrapped in towel)
He has?
(she pauses - finally)
Is she nice?

MA
No.

ELLEN
Do I know her?... Nancy Beal? She always had her eye on him.

MA
No. He met this one on the boat when he went to look for you.

ELLEN
(sadly)
That's one thing I never thought of - Nick's marrying again. But why not? Seven years is a long time...
(grimly)
Just how long did he wait?

MA
They only got married this morning.

ELLEN
This morning...

(CONTINUED)

MA
They went off in the car to Yosemite for the honeymoon.

ELLEN
Yosemite? Don't tell me he's taken her to our hotel? How could he?

MA
Well -- Nick had some business in San Francisco. Ellen - what are you going to do?

She gives Ellen her bathrobe absently.

ELLEN
(putting bathrobe on)
Have you got something I can wear?

MA
I saved a few of your old things in a trunk.

ELLEN
That was sweet. Do you think we can find something that won't look too bad? Are skirts really shorter again? And what are those hats I see? And who's Hitler?
(as they move off to bedroom)
And, oh yes - do planes fly to Yosemite?

MA
I think so. Why? What are you going to do?

ELLEN
(turning)
I don't know.
(wishful thinking)
But I hope I'm not too late.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. YOSEMITE - DAY

28 Picturesque shot of hotel in Yosemite.

DISSOLVE

INT. HOTEL LOBBY (YOSEMITE) - DAY

29 LONG SHOT - as Ellen enters in a little number she wore seven years ago, distinguished by an extra long skirt comprised of two flounces. She sweeps up to the desk breathlessly.

30 CLOSE SHOT - at desk.

CLERK
(with toothy smile)
Yes, Madame?

ELLEN
(catching her breath)
Is Mr. Arden here?

CLERK
No, he hasn't arrived yet.
(he sees the orchids she has pinned on for the occasion)
Are you the bride by any chance?

ELLEN
(looking at orchids)
No. Not exactly.

He stares at her. She realizes she has said something wrong.

ELLEN (cont'd)
I'll wait.
(smiling at him)

She walks off. Clerk is still staring at her as she walks off. She turns to look back surreptitiously. He is still staring.

31 Shooting between two overstuffed lounges facing each other about five feet apart. Ellen walks into scene and seats herself on one of the lounges, closest to camera. Three women are seated opposite the place she has chosen. The women are all brides. One of them is playing with her wedding ring. Suddenly, Ellen is aware that one of the women is snobbishly staring at the length of her skirt. Her skirt, of course, is short. Ellen spends an uncomfortable few seconds. Surreptitiously she begins pulling her skirt up until it is knee length and then, with considerable effort, crosses her legs, smiling sickly at the woman across from her. The skirt slips back to its former position. Ellen beats a hasty retreat to the Ladies Room as CAMERA PANS with her.

DISSOLVE

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - (YOSEMITE) - DAY

32 MED. SHOT - near the overstuffed lounge and the three women. The three women on the lounge join the raised-eyebrow club as Ellen re-enters the scene. The lower flounce of her skirt has been cut away, and the result is not bad. She throws a triumphant smile in the direction of the snobbish woman as she re-seats herself. A moment later, the door of the Ladies Room opens as a woman emerges with a small dog on a leash. Dragging from its mouth is the portion of Ellen's skirt that has been cut off. The dog drops the piece of skirt in front of Ellen. She sees it and hastily kicks it under the lounge.

33 LONG SHOT - of a couple entering the lobby.

34 MED. CLOSE SHOT - Ellen rises anxiously. As the couple approach, she realizes it is not Nicky and his bride. Disappointed, she seats herself again. The clerk is still watching her.

35 At entrance as Nicky and Bianca enter, followed by bellboys. CAMERA TRUCKS with them as they walk toward the desk. There are two clerks behind the desk. Bianca is smiling up at him. Nick smiles back at her. the effect is romantic.

36 AT DESK.

NICK
(catching clerk's look; curtly)
My name is Arden.

CLERK
Oh, yes, Mr. Arden.
(he looks over to catch sight of Ellen, for he wants to tell Nick he has a visitor)
I believe that -- uh --

37 CLOSE SHOT - of Ellen as she catches clerk's eye and shakes her head to indicate she doesn't want her presence revealed.

36 CLOSE SHOT - Clerk, as he stops in mid-air, staring. Being a cosmopolite, he recovers possession of himself and rings the bell with undue force. He turns the register about for Nick to sign.

CLERK
(as the boy steps up)
Suite A.

NICK
Suite A? !!

CLERK
(still put out by the mystery of Ellen, - curtly)
It's our best.

NICK
I know, but I'd rather not have it.

CLERK
I beg your pardon?

NICK
Haven't you anything else?

CLERK
(suspiciously)
I can let you have Suite C? We've just redecorated -- If you don't mind the smell of paint.

NICK
(fervently)
Love it.

Bianca glares at him. Nick is about to sign the register.

BIANCA
Very well. Come along.

(CONTINUED)

38 (CONTINUED)

She moves off with the boy.

NICK
(as he finishes registering)
Couldn't have that suite because I've been here before.. see what I mean?

Clerk nods, smiling, then looks toward Ellen perplexed -- wonders what the hell he's smiling about. Nick hurries off to join Bianca at the elevator.

39 At elevators. Bianca is still waiting. Nick comes in to her.

NICK
Sorry to keep you waiting, dear.

They enter elevator. They turn to face the doors, and as they do so, Nick stares straight ahead of him, incredulously.

40 REVERSE SHOT - shooting from interior elevator. Ellen standing outside elevator doors. The doors close.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

41 As the door of the elevator shuts, Nick stares open-mouthed. His head moves parallel with the closing door as he attempts to catch his last glimpse of Ellen. Bianca looks at him perplexed as he stands in this incongruous position. Nick looks at her sheepishly and smiles as he attempts to hastily straighten up. Bianca takes his arm and snuggles up to him.

BIANCA
Exciting, isn't it?

DISSOLVE

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - DAY

42 At Suite C, as Nick and Bianca walk to it - Nick still dazed and shocked.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SUITE C - DAY

43 FULL SHOT - as Nick follows Bianca in. The bellboys are already there, disposing of luggage, opening windows, hanging coats. Nick stands uncertainly. Finally the boys are finished. Bianca waits impatiently for them to leave. The boys cluster about Nick. He is unaware of their presence.

FIRST BOY
Anything else, sir?

BIANCA
No, thank you, that'll be all.

Nick reaches in his pocket and tips them. The boys exit.

44 Nick now is positive that the sight of Ellen was an illusion. He moves towards Bianca - Bianca puts her arms about him.

BIANCA
Darling!

NICK
(warmly)
Hello---

There is a knock at the door.

VOICE
Waiter.

45 MED. SHOT - a waiter enters with champagne, caviar, etc.

BIANCA
Why, Nicky -- how nice!

WAITER
Shall I open it, sir?

BIANCA
By all means.

NICK
I haven't ordered any wine.
There must be some mistake.

(CONTINUED)

WAITER
No mistake, sir. With the compliments of an old friend. Mumm, 1926.

He pours the glasses.

46 MED. CLOSE SHOT - Nick suddenly realizes that no one but Ellen would know of his fondness for Mumm '26 --

NICK
(suddenly)
I've got to go down.

BIANCA
What on earth for?

NICK
I need some change -- for the tip.
(indicates waiter)

BIANCA
(opening her purse)
I've loads of change.
(she gives change to waiter)

WAITER
Thank you very much... Good night!

BIANCA
(offering Nick his glass)
Well, Nicky, here's to us.

He takes the glass. She sips it.

NICK
(setting the glass down)
I'll be right back. I -- uh -- I -
(Bianca stares; he takes out cigarette case)
No matches!

He moves to the door, and as he does so upsets small table-taboret, and hordes of matches fall to the floor. He looks.

NICK (cont'd)
Oh! Matches!

He kneels to pick them up. Meanwhile Bianca watches him in complete astonishment.

47 MED. CLOSE SHOT - of Nick, as he kneels. He sees telephone box, with bell. Quickly he takes out pencil and runs it along bell.

NICK
(reaching for phone)
I was expecting a call --

Bianca picks up the receiver.

BIANCA
Hello ...

OPERATOR'S VOICE
Number please ...

BIANCA
Did you ring here?

OPERATOR'S VOICE
No, I didn't. Excuse it, please...

Bianca hangs up.

NICK
(crestfallen)
I was expecting a call.

Bianca takes a large flat package and starts unwrapping it.

BIANCA
Is anything the matter?

NICK
(nervously)
No--- No --

(CONTINUED)

BIANCA
(starting to unpack her bag)
You must tell me everything now, you know--

NICK
(miles away)
Oh sure---

BIANCA
(she lifts a leopard skin robe from the package)
Like?

NICK
(absently)
Oh, that's fine. Fine.

BIANCA
Try it on. It's my surprise for you.
(she takes out smaller robe)
I've got one, too. They match.

NICK
(vaguely)
Uh - huh ---
(suddenly rubbing his chin)
I need a shave.

BIANCA
What?

NICK
I'll go down to the barber shop and be right back.

BIANCA
But you don't need a shave.
(she touches his face)
Your skin's as smooth as a baby's.

NICK
I feel like the hairy ape.

BIANCA
I don't mind.

(CONTINUED)

47 (CONTINUED)

NICK
I just don't feel right unless I shave. I'm not myself.

BIANCA
Well, why don't you shave yourself? I'd love to watch you. Remember the way Victoria always watched Albert?

NICK
Albert who?

BIANCA
Prince Albert, and Queen Victoria, silly.

NICK
Yes, but he didn't hack himself to pieces the way I do ...
(moves to the door)
I'll go down to the barber shop and be right back -- right back.

BIANCA
Don't be long, Nicky, please --

NICK
Be right back!

DISSOLVE

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

48 As Nick emerges from the elevator and stares around the lobby.

49 PAN SHOT - the lobby.

50 SHOOTING TOWARD a corner of the lobby where a group of people are sitting on chairs and sofas, facing each other. A woman with her back toward the camera, is reading a magazine. CAMERA TRUCKS with Nick as he walks to her.

NICK
Ellen ---

51 CLOSE SHOT - the young woman turns. It is not Ellen.

52 MED. CLOSE SHOT.

NICK
Pardon me.

He turns quickly from her.

INT. BOOTH OF BAR - DAY

53 Ellen, watching him, smiling.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

54 CLOSEUP - Nick, as he stares.

INT. BOOTH OF BAR - DAY

55 CLOSEUP - Ellen, as she smiles at him.

INT. HOTEL BAR - DAY

56 MED. CLOSE SHOT - of Nick, as he moves to her, still staring.

NICK
(finally)
Ellen!
(he takes her
in his arms
and kisses her)

ELLEN
(happily)
That's all I wanted to know.

In the b.g. four young drinkers stare at this strange scene. So does the bartender.

BARTENDER
Excuse me, folks, but there's an ordiance in this state that don't allow neckin' in barrooms.

(CONTINUED)

The young drinkers laugh.

NICK
(flustered)
Oh, yes ...

INT. BAR - DAY

57 TRUCKING SHOT - of the two as they move off.

NICK
Let's go somewhere where we can talk.

ELLEN
Where?

NICK
We'll go to your room.

ELLEN
I haven't got a room.

NICK
Oh -- well, I'll get you one.

By this time they've arrived at the desk. The clerk looks up. A second clerk in the b.g. is assorting mail. Occasionally he glances at them.

CLERK
Yes?

NICK
I wonder if you can give Mrs. Ard -- Miss -- uh -- Wagstaff a room.

CLERK
Certainly, Sir.

NICK
(innocently)
Is Suite A available?

ELLEN
Yes! Suite A.
(she smiles up at Nick)

(CONTINUED)

(apoplectic)
Have you any luggage, Miss --
uh --

Nick signs the register.

ELLEN
At the airport.
(gives him ticket)
You might send for it. Come
along, Nicky.

A bellboy goes off with them. The second clerk looks after them, and gives a low whistle. The first clerk looks at him surprised. He then looks at Nick and Ellen, then back at the register. It suddenly dawns on him that Nick has registered for two women.

DISSOLVE

INT. SUITE C - LIVING ROOM - DAY

58 Bianca is sitting on the sofa, the leopard robes beside her, pouring the last of the champagne in glass. She drinks it. Finally she reaches for the telephone.

BIANCA
Will you please tear Mr. Arden
away from the barber? Yes.
Page him!
(she hurls the
bottle in basket)

DISSOLVE

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

59 MED. CLOSE SHOT - at door. The bellboy opens the door as Nick and Ellen enter. Nick is listening to her, and looking at her.

ELLEN
-- and then along came the
freighter .. They'd seen my
scanties, which were hanging
in the breeze. I had gotten
some swell pictures, but the
salt water ruined all my plates.

The bellboy is about to enter after them. Nick closes the door on him.

60 MED. SHOT - SHOOTING TOWARD door as Ellen enters, followed by Nick.

NICK
What about the boat?

ELLEN
(continuing)
Oh, the boat. They couldn't speak English and my Portuguese is sketchy, so there we were. After all, Nicky, I can't tell you what happened in seven years in two minutes.

NICKY
(taking her in his arms)
Ellen!

61 The Two.

ELLEN
Really feel that way?

NICK
You know I do.

ELLEN
Good.
(she kisses him)

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

62 Bellboy walking through.

BELLBOY
Calling Mr. Arden ..
Calling Mr. Arden ..

INT. LOBBY - DAY

63 Another Bellboy.

BELLBOY #2
Calling Mr. Arden ..
Calling Mr. Arden ..

64 At Desk. Clerk looks up, and his ears tingle. Grimly he beckons boy and reaches for telephone.

INT. SUITE A - LIVING ROOM - DAY

65 Telephone is ringing. Ellen has answered it.

ELLEN
Yes? Mr. Arden? Just a moment.

She hands telephone to Nick.

NICK
(taking up phone)
Yes.
(he looks at Ellen embarrassed)

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

66 CLOSE SHOT - clerk at the phone.

CLERK
(with great emphasis)
If you're free Mrs. Arden would like to see you! ...

INT. SUITE A - LIVING ROOM - DAY

67 CLOSE SHOT.

NICK
(at phone)
Look here - Oh, very well.
(he hangs up)

68 MED. SHOT.

ELLEN
What's the matter, Nick. Bride wondering where you are? ...
You'll have to face it, you know.

(CONTINUED)

68 (CONTINUED)

NICK
Yes, I know ... What am I going to say?

ELLEN
That depends on what you feel.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
I want to do the right thing by everybody.

ELLEN
Don't you know that's impossible?

NICK
Bianca's rather high-strung ... She's sensitive ... Led a very sheltered life .. This is going to be a horrible shock. Think of her position ... How'll she face her family -- her friends?

69 CLOSER SHOT - favoring Ellen.

ELLEN
Are you in love with her, Nicky?

NICKY
Oh, no.

ELLEN
You must have told her you were... Didn't you? ... When you proposed--?

NICK
Well --

ELLEN
Of course you did.

NICK
(finally)
Well -- yes.

ELLEN
How could you?

NICK
But I thought you were -- I didn't know ... After all!

(CONTINUED)

69 (CONTINUED)

ELLEN
(interrupting - sadly)
The minute my back was turned!
(but her eyes sparkle)

NICK
Minute!

The telephone rings, off-scene.

70 MED. LONG SHOT - Nick snatches the phone.

NICK
(at phone)
Hello ---
(he grimaces)

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

71 CLOSE SHOT - Clerk at telephone.

CLERK
Mr. Arden, we don't like to interfere with the privacy of our guests. We mind our own business, and they mind theirs. Your wife, Mr. Arden, has called again.

INT. SUITE A - LIVING ROOM - DAY

72 Nick at the telephone, while Ellen watches him writhe.

NICK
Well - tell my wife -- I'll be right up --- I'm still being shaved.

He hangs up. Ellen passes her hand over her face, as he sits down beside her.

ELLEN
Once over -- lightly?

(CONTINUED)

Changes
"MY FAVORITE WIFE"

72 (CONTINUED)

NICK
I've got a feeling you're enjoying my misery.

ELLEN
Poor Nick!

He gets up, moves away to a sofa, she follows and sits down beside him.

73 CLOSE SHOT - the two.

ELLEN
(understandingly)
Did you think she'd make a good mother? Was that why you were attracted to her?

NICK
(quickly)
That's it.

ELLEN
She'd be good for Timmy and Chinch?

NICK
(hastily)
Of course.

ELLEN
Of course ---

NICK
(springing up)
Oh, you don't believe me.

ELLEN
I'm merely facing the facts. You loved this woman enough to ask her to be your wife and the mother of my children. That takes a lot of love. Are you <u>sure</u> you don't love her?

NICK
Why, the moment I saw you downstairs -- I knew --
(he takes her hand)

ELLEN
I'll bet you say that to all your wives.

NICK
I could strangle you.

ELLEN
That's one way out.

NICK
(vehemently)
But I just can't barge in and say: 'Sorry. My mistake. Marriage is off.' Can I?

75 CLOSE SHOT - Ellen

ELLEN
Try again. I'll be Bianca...
(she moves away from him to the other side of the sofa)
There ... Now you come in ... Hello, darling.

76 CLOSEUP - Nick.

NICK
(looks at her and swallows)
Hello, Bianca.

77 MED. CLOSE SHOT - the two. Ellen on the sofa. Nick looking at her.

ELLEN
Aren't you going to kiss me?

Nick leans over and kisses her. He holds her ardently.

ELLEN (cont'd)
(sadly)
Was that for Bianca?

There is the sound of imperious knocking at the door.

78 LONG SHOT - the door opens and the clerk enters, followed by a bellboy with an extremely small paper package.

CLERK
(disregarding scene on sofa)
Madame's luggage!

The boy drops the package casually, looks at the two and exits. Clerk closes the door carefully.

CLERK (cont'd)
Could I see you a moment?

He leads Nick to another part of the living room.

79 CLOSE SHOT - the clerk.

CLERK
We run a first class hotel, Mr. Arden, and we don't like to be made a party to an intrigue. We've maintained a reputation for respectability for thirty-three years, and we don't intend to lose it in one night.

80 MED. CLOSE SHOT - the two.

NICK
My reputation for respectability is just as high as your hotel's.

CAMERA DISCLOSES Ellen has become interested and moves closer.

ELLEN
And don't forget mine...
(to clerk)
It's a very simple situation. Explain it to him, Nick.

NICK
You see -- my wife -- my bride --
(then he stops)
Look here, why should I bore you with the details?

CLERK
I won't be bored.

ELLEN
You better go, Nick.

The clerk opens the door for Nick.

CLERK
If you please --

ELLEN
Good night, Nick --

81 TWO SHOT - Clerk and Nick at door.

NICK
I'll be back.

CLERK
I'm afraid not, Mr. Arden.

The two men exit, the clerk closes the door.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

82 As the two men stand there.

CLERK
(pointing)
That's your room, Mr. Arden.

Nick looks at him, swallows. He walks to the door, tries it. It's locked. Nick is relieved.

NICK
It's locked.

CLERK
I have a pass key.

He chooses a key, knocks and opens the door.

CLERK (cont'd)
No hard feelings.

Nick looks at him, then enters, the door closing behind him. The clerk marches toward the elevator.

INT. SUITE "C" - LIVING ROOM - DAY

83 As Bianca hears Nick enter the sitting room.

BIANCA
(off-scene)
Nick? About time! ... Where are you? Come in here, dear.

84 As Nick stands there, galvanized. He can't face it. He goes quickly to the door and exits.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

85 As he looks down the empty corridor, and makes for the stairs, sees the elevator descend with clerk.

86 As Bianca enters,

BIANCA
Nick? Where are you?

She looks about, convinces herself he's not there, she becomes enraged.

87 OMITTED

INT. LOBBY - DAY

88 FULL SHOT - Nick, exceedingly preoccupied, makes his way to a post which he hugs.

NICK
(mumbling to himself)
Now, Bianca, this is the situation ... This hurts me more than it hurts you ...No ...

89 CLOSE SHOT - of clerk, as he stares. What he sees is Nick, whom he has just deposited presumably, going through a strange series of pantomiming gestures. He moves near him.

90 MED. CLOSE SHOT - the two.

NICK
Now, Bianca, this is the situation .. Something's come up. My wife. Truth is stranger than fiction...The fact is, Bianca, I still love her, and there are the children. Mother love and all that... Even a tiger fights for its young. And besides, there's something between two people who've been married - that you don't get between two people who haven't been married. Now be big, Bianca. Be brave. You will? Thatagirl!

He turns with a beam and stares directly into the clerk's puss. Startled, anxious to get away from his nemesis, he makes a dash for the telephone booths. He enters one, as he feels the baleful eyes of the clerk on him.

91 SHOT.

NICK
Give me Mrs. Arden in Suite "C".
(he waits - then
he begins
rehearsing
to himself)
Now look, Bianca, something's
come up --

INT. LOBBY - DAY

92 At elevators. The doors open and Bianca comes out. A bellboy comes to her.

BOY
Call for you, Mrs. Arden.

Bianca follows the boy toward booths, off-scene. CAMERA PANS with her as she enters one next to Nick's.

INT. TELEPHONE BOOTH - DAY

93 As Bianca lifts receiver.

BIANCA
(into telephone)
Hello?

INT. NICK'S TELEPHONE BOOTH - DAY

94 SHOT.

NICK
Bianca? This is the situation -
it hurts me more than it hurts
you. Something's come up ---

INT. BIANCA'S TELEPHONE BOOTH - DAY

95 SHOT.

BIANCA
Why don't you come up?

EXT. TELEPHONE BOOTHS - DAY

96 CAMERA CLOSE enough to hear both Bianca's and Nick's voices as they speak.

NICK
Come up? But I can't.

BIANCA
Why not?

NICK
Well -- I'm in Carmel.

BIANCA
Carmel!

NICK
Yes - that client of mine in San Francisco -- I didn't want to tell you ... He's wired me to come. Matter of life and death.

BIANCA
Well you might have told me before you...

NICK
I can't hear you...what? What?

BIANCA
(sobbing)
I loathe you...I despise you... I never want to see you again.

NICK
You don't mean that, Bianca.
(then hopefully)
Do you?

BIANCA
You come right back...Do you hear me? Take the first plane back...

(CONTINUED)

96 (CONTINUED)

NICK
(shouting)
What? I can't hear you ...
the propellers ...
(he looks up
and sees fan)

97 MED. CLOSE SHOT - of Nick, as he turns fan whirling into roar, not unlike that of a plane.

NICK
(shouting)
I've got to run ... I've got to
run ... We're taking off ...
I've got to run ...

He hangs up. Under the hypnotism of his own words, he grabs door quickly and opens it, as Bianca emerges from her booth, and the two face each other.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. LOWER HALLWAY - ARDEN HOME - NIGHT

98 CLOSE SHOT on front door - Ma enters to it, opens the door, Ellen, Chinch and Timmy enter. The children are ladened with bags of popcorn, Timmy has a large, cumbersome box containing a toy of some kind and Chinch has a balloon on a stick.

AD LIB
Hello! Hello!

Then Timmy and Chinch continue simultaneously:

TIMMY
Gosh, what a day. We went to the planetarium, the acquarium and a Mickey Mouse and look what I got.

CHINCH
And we went to the Park, too, and we had hygienic hamburgers, with nuts.

While Ellen laughs at their excitement.

MA
All right, all right, you can tell me all about it later. Go on up and put your things away now.

As the kids race up the stairs, noisily, Timmy calls back over the railing.

TIMMY
(yells down)
And we went to the Zoo, too.

Ma turns to Ellen as the children exit.

MA
Did you tell them who you were?

ELLEN
(shamefacedly)
No, I didn't. I got pretty close, though -- once or twice.

(CONTINUED)

MA
(disappointed)
Oh, Ellen.

ELLEN
Well, you could hardly expect me to play a tender scene in front of the elephants -- now could you?

Ma laughs -- Ellen starts to take off her hat and coat.

ELLEN (cont'd)
Have you heard from Nick?

MA
No -- not a word -- it's funny.

ELLEN
Not to me, it isn't. Do you suppose he's having trouble telling her?

MA
Well, he's had a night and a day -- that ought to be long enough.

ELLEN
That's just it -- it's too long.

They start to go off.

INT. ROADSTER - NIGHT - (PROCESS)

98a Nick is driving along the road. Bianca, seated beside him, puzzled and miserable, looks out. She turns and looks back at Nick.

BIANCA
Don't you think you owe me an explanation?

NICK
Yes, I do.

BIANCA
Well?

NICK
When we get home.

DISSOLVE OUT

INT. ARDEN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

99-104 SHOT of Ellen, Timmy and Chinch.

TIMMY
"And when his father came to see
He stood up straight and tall like me.
He told the truth about that tree,
He was no Coward, oh no, not he!"

ELLEN
Good, Timmy, where'd you learn that?

TIMMY
Oh, around.

ELLEN
Oh, no, don't eat any more. You'll spoil your dinner.

CHINCH
Did you know any pieces when you were little?

ELLEN
Yes, I knew a few. Let's see. Oh, here's one. Oh, I'm sorry.
"In old Kaintuck where I was born
There ain't no Yanks and there ain't no corn,
But the gals and hosses can't be beat
To live down South is sure a treat."

TIMMY
How come you talk like that?

ELLEN
Didn't you-all ever hear anybody talk like that before?

TIMMY AND CHINCH
No --

(CONTINUED)

TIMMY
Did it take you very long to learn it?

ELLEN
Why, everybody talks like that where I come from.
(she looks at the children tentatively)
Even your mother.

TIMMY
She did?

CHINCH
Before she was drowned?

TIMMY
Nobody talks after they're drowned.

ELLEN
Well, sometimes they do.

TIMMY
(skeptically)
Aw.

ELLEN
Of course they're not really drowned. People think they are, but they're not.

The kids stare at her. Ellen is floundering.

TIMMY
My mother wouldn't do anything silly like that.

ELLEN
Like what?

TIMMY
Talk after she was drowned. Why, that's ridiculous.

ELLEN
Yes, isn't it?

TIMMY
Do you know any more pieces?

Ma comes in.

MA
Well, it's getting late. You'd better get ready for dinner.

TIMMY
Aw, already?

ELLEN
Yes, go on, Timmy.

TIMMY
Aw, all right.

MA
You too, Chinch.

ELLEN
Go on, darling.

Kids exit and Ma looks about, lowers her voice and says:

MA
You didn't tell them, did you?

ELLEN
No, I tried but I'm afraid I didn't get very far. It's going to be harder than I thought. After all, I don't want to shock them.
(she gets an idea)
Maybe Nick can help me. He can introduce me properly.

MA
Of course.

ELLEN
(fondly)
Poor Nick.

MA
Why -- poor Nick?

ELLEN
He's such a creature of habit -- and here I come barging in -- And he's got to get rid of a brand new bride, which really isn't easy for Nick -- break the news to his children -- tell his friends. And Nick hates anything that isn't strictly conventional and legal.

MA
Well, he was always a timid boy.

There is the sound of a car.

MA (cont'd)
Oh, there's Nicky now.

ELLEN
Oh, he's brought her home.

MA
Don't you suppose he's told her?

ELLEN
I guess not.

MA
Then perhaps it would be better if you weren't here.

ELLEN
Well, I don't see why I should leave.

MA
Don't you see, it's just that it'll be a little awkward...

ELLEN
I know, I know. Tell her I'm an old friend, from the South.

EXT. NICKY'S HOME - EVENING

105 At street as the roadster pulls up and stops.

INT. ROADSTER - EVENING

106 Nick, driving, bundled up with shawl, overcoat, etc. Bianca sits beside him, slumped, lips pursed, eyes vacant.

NICK
(brightly)
Well, here we are. Home!

She starts to get out of car, when Timmy's voice is heard off scene.

TIMMY'S VOICE
Daddy!

EXT. NICKY'S HOME - NIGHT

107 Timmy and Chinch come bounding up to their father and Bianca. He picks them up and kisses them.

TIMMY
Hello, Miss Bates.

CHINCH
How are you?

BIANCA
Fine, thanks...

CHINCH
(interrupting - turns to Nick)
Did you have a good time?

NICK
Very nice. Very nice.

108 GROUP SHOT.

TIMMY
Did you bring us a present, Daddy?

(CONTINUED)

NICK
(snapping his fingers)
Darn... I forgot... I'm sorry.

TIMMY
Aw gee!

NICK
I promise you I'll get you something from Yosemite the very next time I go there.

109 CLOSE SHOT - Bianca.

BIANCA
Aren't you going to tell them?

NICK
Oh, sure...
(then quickly - for he realizes there's no sense in presenting a step-mother who's going to be canned)
You kids run in and wash up. Isn't it time for your supper?

TIMMY
It's not six o'clock.

NICK
(with parental sternness)
Now don't argue with me. In you go!

TIMMY
Aw, what did I do?

NICK
In you go!

(CONTINUED)

TIMMY
Yes, sir.

The kids move off. Bianca watches him in some astonishment as he reaches for the suitcase.

110 TRUCKING SHOT - as Nick and Bianca walk toward the house.

BIANCA
Why didn't you tell them I was their new mother?

NICK
Oh, didn't I do that?... Well, I didn't want to confuse them.

BIANCA
Confuse?

NICK
(as they get to door; desperately)
I mean I'm confused...driving! Let's go in!

111 CLOSE SHOT - at door. Nick is about to open door when Bianca stops.

BIANCA
Nick!

NICK
What?

BIANCA
Aren't you going to carry me over the threshold?

Nick swallows. Finally he steels himself. He decides he'd rather not argue. He picks her up.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

112 MED. LONG SHOT - as Nick enters, carrying Bianca, and sees Ellen there, waiting.

NICK
Hello.

Nick's mother appears behind Ellen. Nick continues to stare at Ellen.

113 CLOSE SHOT - Nick's mother. She has been rehearsed for the part and is rather nervous. Nick stares.

ELLEN
(with strong southern accent) -throws her arms about Nick)
Hello, Nicholas!
(to Bianca)
You-all mind if I kiss the bridegroom? Just a great big sisterly kiss.
(she smacks him)
There!

MA
(to Bianca)
She's visiting with us. Her mother and I went to school together in Virginia. I just feel like she's my own daughter.

NICK
Mighty nice to see you again.

ELLEN
(to Bianca)
He's too sweet, reahlly... I used to adore him...just adore him. He was the darlin'est boy you ever did see. But faithless! Just like a bumble-bee...going from flower to flower! Faithless!

(CONTINUED)

She wiggles a finger at Nick and rumples his hair. Nick and Bianca look uncomfortable.

ELLEN (cont'd)
I was only foolin'...!
(she puts her arm in Nick's)
Why, we're just one big foolin' family. Why my great grandfather Joshua was the first man to give the Governor of North Carolina the hot foot!

NICK
Now wait a minute!

MOTHER
You must be tired, son.
(at Bianca)
You both look tired.

Bianca winces.

ELLEN
(giggling)
That's what I've been thinkin' but not darin' to say...

Bianca glares at her, but Ellen takes her arm as they move into the living room.

ELLEN (cont'd)
Of course, you-all were married before, weren't you-all?

BIANCA
What? Of course not!

ELLEN
Now where'd I get the idea you-all were a widow?

BIANCA
(glaring at Nick)
Not yet!

Ellen notices a very attractive brooch Bianca is wearing.

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN
Isn't that lovely!
(looks at Nick)
Engagement present?

Nick looks uncomfortable.

ELLEN (cont'd)
(fingering
the brooch)
I used to have one just like it!

She glares at Nick.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

114 Nick moving to bar, desperately.

NICK
I'll make a drink, shall I?

Nick walks to the open bar.

ELLEN
Did...you-all drive all night?

NICK
(as he stops,
poised, with
cocktail shaker)
Uh...well...

BIANCA
(quickly)
Oh, we stopped at a charming place...a sort of rose-covered bungalow. Nick picked it. He wanted just the right thing, he said.

115 MED. CLOSE SHOT - Nick trying to indicate by pantomime to Ellen that there's absolutely nothing to it.

116 BACK TO SCENE - as Bianca turns to him, and he assiduously works the cocktail shaker.

BIANCA
It was so serene...so peaceful... so romantic.

He brings the tray with glasses and shaker.

BIANCA (cont'd)
Nick was so thoughtful.

NICK
Cocktail?

BIANCA
Thank you, sweet.

NICK
(offering drink to Ellen)
Cocktail?

ELLEN
(mimicking slightly)
Thank you, sweet.

NICK
Mother?

MA
No, I wouldn't trust myself.

ELLEN
Here's to the happy couple. Brother Nicholas is a bridegroom <u>again</u>. My, how time flies! Why I remember Nicholas the first time he got married....to that lovely, lovely girl, poor thing. So young....so pretty.
(her voice breaks)
You'll pardon me... I just can't help it...when I think of poor ... poor ...
(she buries her face in her handkerchief)

(CONTINUED)

116 (CONTINUED)

NICK
(grimly)
Control yourself!

ELLEN
(sobbing)
I can't!

NICK
Have another cocktail!

ELLEN
Thank you, sweet.

NICK
(desperately)
How about dinner?

ELLEN
How can you-all think of food at a time like this?

NICK
Now, listen...

PHILIP
(entering)
Dinner is served.

117 MED. SHOT - Nick. He goes to the head of the stairs. Ellen follows him.

NICK
Chinch? ... Timmy....hurry up, will you? Dinner's ready.

TIMMY
I'm coming.
(slides down the bannister - as he passes Ellen)
H'ya, Pal!

(CONTINUED)

Bianca stares.

ELLEN
Your hands clean?

TIMMY
(he displays)
Oh, sure.

ELLEN
We rode a pony in the park today... We went to the Zoo...we took in the aquarium, the planetarium and a Mickey Mouse.

CHINCH
(appearing on stairs)
And we had hygienic hamburgers, with nuts.

TIMMY
That's all she thinks about is food.

CHINCH
I do not. Let's eat.

Ellen and kids enter the dining room. Bianca turns to Nick.

BIANCA
I hate to bring this up again, but when are you going to tell the children?

NICK
Right after dinner. Let's go.

He strides forward. Bianca remains there puzzled for a moment as Ma enters scene.

BIANCA
(turns to Ma)
Does he ever intend to present me as their mother?

MA
Well, Nick's very peculiar.

BIANCA
Yes, I found that out.

DISSOLVE OUT

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

118 Ellen is seated facing the kids. Bianca takes the head of the table, Nick the other end. Ma seated next to Nick. Philip is serving.

ELLEN
Nicholas .. do you know Chinch got two gold stars from her music teacher?

NICK
No! Did you?

CHINCH
Uh-huh.

NICK
(to Bianca)
Chinch got two gold stars from her music teacher.

BIANCA
I heard the news.

ELLEN
Don't you think that's exciting?

BIANCA
(dully)
Very.

ELLEN
Wouldn't you-all like to hear Chinch play for us after dinner?

CHINCH
I play by heart ... without the paper.

ELLEN
Wonderful!

NICK
I had quite an ear when I was a kid.

BP (CONTINUED)

ELLEN
Why, Nicholas, you couldn't carry a tune. You still can't.

NICK
I had the finest voice in the choir.

ELLEN
(to Bianca)
Why one night I remember he got under my window and sang "Oh Promise Me" and I swear it sounded just like "Casey Jones"...
(sighs)
Remember? Has he ever serenaded you?
(turns to Bianca)

BIANCA
I like my husband's voice.

ELLEN
You-all are not very fond of music, are you? What did he sing for you: "Oh, Promise Me"? Or "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes"? That's the repertoire.

NICK
(interrupting quickly)
Timmy .. how's school?

TIMMY
All right.

NICK
Timmy's quite an orator.

ELLEN
You didn't tell me that, Timmy. Will you recite for me after dinner?

TIMMY
I don't want to recite.

ELLEN
Why, Timmy, I'd love to hear you.

118 (CONTINUED)

TIMMY
I'm no show-off.

ELLEN
Why, nobody said you were, Timmy.

TIMMY
I don't want to recite.

ELLEN
Well, then you don't have to... Don't you want to finish your broccoli?

TIMMY
No.

ELLEN
Then you don't have to ...
(turns to mother)
Isn't he just like Nicholas, when he was a boy?

MA
Just.

NICK
I like that. Why, I always recited - I was the valedictorian of my class, and I always finished my broccoli.

TIMMY
I'll finish my broccoli but I won't recite.

ELLEN
(beams at him)
That's fair enough.

DISSOLVE OUT

DISSOLVE IN ,

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

119 Piano music. Chinch is playing "Speedboat", a rigorous study in scales. Ellen is seated near the piano. Bianca, exhausted, in an easy chair. Nick is smoking a pipe. Ma is seated on sofa. Timmy, at the other side of the piano, is glowering, jealous of Chinch.

CHINCH
This is "Speedboat" ...
(as she plays)
No ... I made a mistake ...
(she goes all the way back)

120 MED. CLOSE SHOT - Bianca as she's dying of boredom.

BIANCA
Just pick up where you left off, if you don't mind.

CHINCH
My teacher says I mustn't do that.
(she begins again and works up, stops)
I made a mistake.

ELLEN
You go right back, darling.

Bianca sighs.

NOTE During the playing of "Speedboat" and also possibly during the recital of "Gettysburg Address", Bianca will pick a daisy from a nearby vase and absently pluck the petals in the "He loves me, he loves me not" fashion. Nick's attention will be attracted and he will follow the chorus so that when she reaches the end and she seems pleased as it comes out he loves her, Nick's face falls and he snaps his fingers.

121 MED. CLOSE SHOT - Chinch, as with determination she tackles the piano. She's going hell-bent for leather.

122 MED. CLOSE SHOT - Timmy, writhing. Finally he can't stand it any more. He jumps to his feet.

TIMMY
Four score and seven years ago our forefathers.. etc., etc., etc.

ELLEN
Good boy!

Chinch continues playing while Timmy recites.

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN (cont'd)
(whispering to Ma)
Just like Nicholas ... jealous!

Timmy recites and Chinch plays.

BIANCA
(to Nick)
My head's splitting. I'm going to bed.

NICK
(waves her off casually)
All right.

BIANCA
(surprised)
Coming, Nick?

NICK
I can't .. the kids ..

But the kids finish at that moment. He applauds strenuously.

CHINCH
I've got a better piece - "Woodland Noises".

BIANCA
(firmly)
I'm going to bed.

Chinch begins to play.

BIANCA (cont'd)
Coming, Nick?

NICK
In a little while.

Bianca goes upstairs. Ellen goes to piano bench and sits next to Chinch.

ELLEN
That's lovely, Chinch ...

(CONTINUED)

Ellen plays a few chords of "Oh, Promise Me".

NICK
Sounds like "Casey Jones", does it?

He lifts his voice. The two sing together.

TIMMY
(as they sing)
Half a league -- half a league --
Half a league onward ...

DISSOLVE

INT. BIANCA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

123 Bianca is in her negligee and she is laying out tenderly the leopard skin robe and florid pajamas on the bed. Then she goes to dressing-table, picks up perfume, puts it behind her ears, and then as an after-thought, adds a drop to the robe and the pajamas.

DISSOLVE

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

124 Children are on the stairs, with Ma, Nick and Ellen below.

NICK
Now, no argument. You've been up an hour past your bed-time.

TIMMY
Aw, all right. Just when the party's getting good. Isn't that always the way?

ELLEN
Good night, Chinch.
(she kisses her)
Good night, Timmy.
(she stoops to kiss him)

TIMMY
(sidestepping)
I cut that stuff out a year ago.
(he extends his hand)

(CONTINUED)

124 (CONTINUED)

ELLEN
(taking his hand)
Sorry. Good night, Timmy.

MA
Come along, children.

125 MED. CLOSE SHOT - of Ellen and Nick watching as the kids troop up.

ELLEN
You've done a good job, Nick. They're nice kids. They're really quite wonderful.

NICK
I like them.

ELLEN
Timmy's just like you.

NICK
Oh, he's a bright boy.

ELLEN
Obstinate ... jealous....

BIANCA'S VOICE
Nick?

ELLEN
I think the bride's calling you, Nick.

INT. LANDING - NIGHT

126 Bianca, in negligee.

BIANCA
(tenderly)
Nick, are you coming up, darling?

NICK
In just a minute ...
(turns to Ellen)
What were you saying?

ELLEN
I was saying - Timmy's just like you - obstinate .. jealous.. contrary .. but adorable.

NICK
(modestly)
Oh, well --

ELLEN
I pity the woman who marries him.

NICK
Why?

ELLEN
He's a heart-breaker -- just like you.

NICK
(indignantly)
Why, I'm one of the most faithful husbands that ever lived!

ELLEN
With a wife in every room.

BIANCA'S VOICE
(now a little sharper)
Nick, are you coming up?

NICK
Coming right up!

ELLEN
(whispering)
Are you going to tell her?

NICK
Sure.

ELLEN
When?

NICK
Tonight ... Right now,...of course, it's going to take tact ... and delicacy.

ELLEN
But you've got what it takes?

NICK
Sure.

INT. LANDING - NIGHT

126

BIANCA
(completely out of patience)
Nick, I'm waiting!

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

129

ELLEN
She's waiting.

NICK
I'm coming.

Nick leans forward and kisses Ellen.

ELLEN
You Casanova!

As he moves forward, she watches him, smiling.

DISSOLVE OUT

Changes
"MY FAVORITE WIFE"

DISSOLVE IN

INT. LANDING - NIGHT

130 As Nick stands before Bianca's door. He is obviously squirming. He doesn't relish the prospect. He braces himself, moves firmly to the door, and then stops. He hears Bianca's voice, and he bends forward to hear and opens door carefully.

BIANCA'S VOICE
And then we drove ALL night --
ALL night.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

131 Bianca is seated on bed, telephoning. Her back is to the door.

BIANCA
(hysterically)
Mother, he just ignores me....
I've never been so humiliated...
(she sobs)
What? I don't care what father
did!.....I'm going to leave him.
I won't stand it another minute.

132 MED. CLOSE SHOT - of Nick at door, as he beams from ear to ear. His troubles are over.

133 MED. CLOSE SHOT - of Bianca as she hears or feels his presence. She glares at him. His smile fades.

BIANCA
Mother, I'll call you back.
(she hangs up)

NICK
(uncomfortably)
How is your mother?...
(tries again)
Your mother is very nice -- once
you get to know her.

BIANCA
I just want to know one thing --
Do you love me?

(CONTINUED)

NICK
Bianca, you're one of the most attractive girls I know. That's what my secretary, Miss Rosenthal said the time you came down to the office. And she's mighty hard to please.

BIANCA
(screaming)
I'm your WIFE!

NICK
(with court-room manner)
That's what I was coming to. Bianca, as a lawyer, I watch Fate play strange tricks on innocent men and women. Cruel tricks. BUT --- time heals all wounds. Pretty soon there are new interests, new associates -- a new life and new happiness -- and we laugh -- Yes, we laugh -- at what we thought once was tragedy.

BIANCA
(flinging herself down on the bed)
Why do you torture me?
(sobbing)

NICK
I just wanted to explain ---

BIANCA
You beast!

NICK
I know---I know...

BIANCA
(flinging the leopard robe aside as her eye lights on it)
When I think how I shopped all afternoon until I was exhausted for a surprise for you---and you won't even put it on.

NICK
I'll put it on---only please don't cry.
(he puts it on)

Struggling into the robe. The robe doesn't fit.

BIANCA
Making up to that Southern snip! Just as if I weren't there.
(she turns to him with new attack)
For the love of Heaven, tell me--- what's wrong with me?

NICK
There's nothing wrong with you. Bianca, believe me---under other circumstances---who knows? Let me explain, Bianca---only please stop crying.

BIANCA
What's there to explain?

NICK
You see---Well---Now listen very carefully. This is not going to be easy for either one of us... Are you listening?

BIANCA
Yes---
(sniffling a little bit)

NICK
That's better. Now first of all, let me say that I had no idea that--- Well, would you?
(Bianca looks up)
I mean---Well, let me start from the beginning. Once there was a man who met a girl. He'd been living alone for quite some time. He told her that he loved her and in the natural course of events, he married the said girl.

133 (CONTINUED)

BIANCA
What are you trying to say?

NICK
Just this---
(he pauses,
plunges)
Bianca.....
(doorbell rings,
then quickly)
Doorbell! That's for me...
I'll be right back.

134 OMITTED.

135 CLOSE SHOT - at door. As Nick opens the door and reveals an earnest and bespectacled gentlemen, one Johnson.

JOHNSON
I'm awfully sorry to be intruding on you at this hour, but I'm Johnson of American Life and Accident Assurance. I had the privilege of meeting you at the Kiwanis get-together Fourth of July last.

NICK
(heartily)
Come right in, Mr. Johnson.
(he pumps his hand)

136 TRUCKING SHOT - as Johnson enters and Nick walks with him to the living room.

JOHNSON
I hope you'll forgive me for rousing you from your bed --

NICK
(fervently)
Not at all. Glad you came.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

137 MED. LONG SHOT.

NICK
(continuing)
Sit down. Stay awhile.

JOHNSON
Thank you.

Being a methodical man, Johnson opens his brief case, takes out papers.

138 TWO SHOT.

NICK
What can I do for you?

(CONTINUED)

JOHNSON
Mr. Arden - have you received any communication from your first wife, Ellen Wagstaff Arden?

NICK
(startled)
Eh?

JOHNSON
Letter - telegram - telephone?
(before Nick can answer)
No... Just as I thought!
(very pleased)
My district manager, Mr. Pusey, is one of those fuss-budgety types who likes to check everything. Of course, it's customary to check when the company has paid out a large sum of money --- but this is ridiculous.

NICK
What are you driving at?

139 CLOSE SHOT - Johnson.

JOHNSON
He claims they have a report -- a rumor really -- that a woman answering the general description of your first wife was rescued by a Portuguese freighter, as was also a young man answering the general description of Stephen Burkett, the gentleman who was reported drowned with her.
(puts down report - adjusts glasses)
Absurd, isn't it?

140 TWO SHOT

NICK
Would you mind saying that again?

JOHNSON
Please don't be angry with me.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
This -- Stephen Burkett was rescued -- at the same time -- as my wife?

JOHNSON
According to this unverified rumor --

NICK
They were on that island together for seven years?

JOHNSON
Ridiculous, isn't it?

NICK
(grimly)
What else did your district manager hear?

JOHNSON
Very little really. It seems he talked to someone who talked to a Portuguese captain.
(he scans the report)
Listen to this: the captain said the woman called the man Adam.

NICK
Adam?

JOHNSON
A far cry from Stephen! It's absurd, really.

NICK
What did he call her?

JOHNSON
(looking at report)
Eve!...
(then he gets it)
Adam and Eve...A delightful fancy.

140 (CONTINUED)

NICK
Delightful.

JOHNSON
(as he rises)
Well, you ought to be thankful it's just a fancy because, aside from the money involved, can you imagine the pickle you'd be in --- if it weren't?

141 CLOSEUP - of Nick as he tries a frozen smile.

JOHNSON
(smiling with him)
I mean to say, what could you possibly tell your bride? And this business of the man on the island - for seven years...I mean to say...Am I being vulgar? No offense...

NICK
No, no.

JOHNSON
Well, then -- sorry to have troubled you.
(gently)
Good night...Ridiculous, isn't it? Ridiculous!
(rises)

NICK
(smiles with an effort)
Good night.

Johnson finds his way out. Nick is sunk. He paces the room. The situation is changed. Ellen and Stephen Burkett were alone on an island for seven years and called each other Adam and Eve. This is all Nick can think of. Finally, he moves up the steps, grimly determined.

INT. UPPER CORRIDOR - NIGHT

142 Nick strides determinedly toward Ellen's room. As he reaches Bianca's room, fearful of disturbing her, he tip-toes. Her door opens.

BIANCA
(whispering)
Nick?

NICK
(absently)
Yes? What is it?

BIANCA
Nick!

NICK
(sees her)
Oh! Just a minute!
(looks at her, quickly)
I've got to talk to my mother.

Bianca watches him stupefied as he hurries forward. Nick moves on, turns the corridor. He looks back. No sound.

143 TRUCKING SHOT - it is dark as Nick tiptoes his way with an occasional creak, heading for Ellen's room. As he proceeds most cautiously, he stumbles over a pair of Timmy's roller skates. He swears softly.

INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM- NIGHT

144 CLOSE SHOT - Timmy in bed. His eyes are wide open and gleam into the darkness. He sits up, and gets out of bed, CAMERA FOLLOWS him to Chinch's bed. He wakes her by the simple expedient of poking her in the ribs.

TIMMY
Sh...Burglars!

CHINCH
Huh?

Timmy goes to the door and Chinch follows, CAMERA FOLLOWS them. He opens the door cautiously.

145 Shooting from door of children's room. Through the children's eyes, we see the back of Nick as he is tiptoeing down the hall to Ellen's room.

146 CLOSE SHOT - at Ellen's door. As Nick knocks softly, turn the knob and enters.

147 CLOSE SHOT - at nursery door as the children look at each other.

CHINCH
That's no burglar. That's Daddy.

INT. ELLEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

148 Nick is standing in darkness, fumbling for light. He switches it on.

149 MED. CLOSE SHOT - Ellen, as she blinks. Nick walks to the bed.

ELLEN
(roused from deep sleep)
What -- what --

NICK
How can you sleep at a time like this? Dreaming of Adam, I suppose?

ELLEN
Adam?

150 CLOSE SHOT - Nick.

NICK
Adam and Eve! Why didn't you tell me you weren't alone on that island? Why didn't you tell me this man Burkett was with you? Why do you dissemble - and deceive? I've just had a session with the insurance investigator.

(CONTINUED)

Ellen laughs, off-scene.

NICK (cont'd)
What are you laughing at?

151 TWO SHOT.

ELLEN
You, darling. That - that robe!

NICK
(furiously)
How do you think I'm going to look when this story comes out -- my wife and this man alone on an island for seven years.

ELLEN
We didn't arrange it, Nick. It just happened.

NICK
I'll bet it did.

ELLEN
Will you please get that look out of your eye?

NICK
Why didn't you tell me about him?

ELLEN
Because I knew you'd carry on just the way you're carrying on now.

NICK
That's no excuse.

ELLEN
I wanted to pick the right time to tell you --

NICK
There never will be a right time -- seven years on an island! Do you mean to tell me he didn't molest you in any way?

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN
How could he? The poor fellow broke his leg trying to get our boat through the surf. He was laid up for six months.

NICK
That still leaves six and a half years.

152 MED. CLOSE SHOT - as Ellen swings out of bed, suddenly.

ELLEN
(taking the offensive)
It's just occurred to me that I ought to feel insulted. I go through seven years of agony. I return to find my husband in the arms of another woman -- married. My children don't know me. And all my husband can think of is did I carry on with a poor man who wouldn't hurt a fly.

NICK
Just a moment.

ELLEN
Did you tell her?

NICK
Well --uh --

ELLEN
No! You got into costume!

NICK
(interrupting)
I was about to tell her when the insurance man --

153 CLOSE SHOT - ELLEN

ELLEN
How long does it take to tell a woman! My wife's come back... I can say it in less than five seconds. You've had two days.
(breaks)
Oh, Nick ... You don't want to tell her...
(with a choke)
That's why you're picking on poor Adam ... Any excuse will do ...

She watches him furtively to see the effect.

154 TWO SHOT

NICK
(moves to her)
Now -- now -- don't cry, Ellen ... I'm sorry ... You can't blame me.. It was a bit of a shock hearing about Burkett from that man ... What was I to think?

ELLEN
You'd always think the worst of me.

NICK
Where is he now?

ELLEN
Who?

NICK
You know who I'm talking about!

ELLEN
Oh -- poor Adam? Still jealous of poor Adam! Gentle, harmless Adam -- He lives at the Y.M.C.A.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
The Y.M.C.A.?

ELLEN
Yes, he always lives at the Y.M.C.A. He's a clean-living, upright, 100% American and a gentleman. Is there anything more I can say?

NICK
Yes -- when do I meet him?

ELLEN
When do you tell her?

NICK
(exasperated)
Good night.
(he closes the door)

ELLEN
Good night.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

155 MED. FULL SHOT - as Nick turns, he sees Timmy and Chinch.

NICK
Timmy - what are you doing here?

156 CLOSE SHOT - the children, more puzzled than ever, look at each other - completely perplexed at Nick's behavior - and Timmy shrugs his shoulders. CAMERA PULLS BACK to include Nick.

NICK
(flustered)
This is no time of the night for you to be tramping around the house. Go back to bed.

CHINCH
We thought you were a burglar.

NICK
Well, I'm not ... off to bed with you.

The children do not move. They just stare again.

156 (CONTINUED)

NICK (cont'd)
Didn't you hear me? What's wrong with you?

They back slowly away. Nick suddenly stops them.

NICK (cont'd)
Oh - uh - children -
(they pause)
Uh - if the subject should ever come up, you didn't see me here tonight.
(the children stare, further puzzled; Nick flounders)
We understand - the three of us - but the others might not.

TIMMY
Understand what, Daddy?

NICK
The situation. What I mean to say is: Don't mention our little talk here ...
(he is sweating)
You're supposed to be asleep - I'm supposed to be asleep - and--
(points)
Well -- we're all supposed to be asleep - and we are asleep.

157 CLOSEUP - the children, more than ever puzzled.

158 MED. CLOSE SHOT

NICK
Well, good night, children ... off to bed, and don't make any noise. On your way ... And, oh yes - for being good children, I'm going to give you each a new shiny quarter in the morning.

Slowly they exit, still staring.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

159 He walks down, very much disturbed. He rounds the corridor.

160 He opens his room, sneaks into bathroom. He gathers up his clothes in a bundle, furtively, and starts tiptoeing out.

161 As he tiptoes down, Bianca's door opens.

BIANCA
Now where are you going?

NICK
(quickly - whispering)
The Y.M.C.A.!
(he hurries down)

CAMERA STAYS on Bianca. This is too much for her. She almost moans in pain.

FADE OUT

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

162 Door marked -- "Price, Lyman, Hunneker, Landon, MacMahon and Arden." As secretary opens the door with a key. She takes off her coat and then walks toward the door marked "Mr. Arden." Nick's voice can be heard as she enters.

INT. NICK'S OFFICE - DAY

163 She stops, surprised and throughout the scene casts wondering glances at his attire. Nick, his leopard skin robe over him, is seated at his desk. There are several open telephone books before him...a half-eaten sandwich and a wax coffee container.

NICK
(into phone - tired)
He's not there -- Thanks --
(he hangs up)
Good morning, Miss Rosenthal. I want you to find a Stephen Burkett -- drop everything else. It's very important. I've called all the hotels -- call the country clubs -- the men's clubs -- the athletic clubs --

SECRETARY
(helpfully)
The Y.M.C.A.?

NICK
(shouting)
No! I tried that. They never even heard of him!

The secretary retreats, but stops at the door to cast another glance at the robe. He gets it - then shouts:

NICK (cont'd)
And get me some clothes.

SECRETARY
Yes sir.

DISSOLVE

EXT. PACIFIC CLUB - DAY

164 LONG SHOT - Nick can be seen entering the impressive Pacific Club. The building is pretentious and is perched on the palisades overlooking the ocean.

DISSOLVE OUT

DISSOLVE IN

INT. LOBBY - PACIFIC CLUB - DAY

165 MED. SHOT - house telephone stand. Nick is talking into one of the house phones.

NICK
Are you sure Mr. Burkett isn't in his room? -- I see. Then will you try paging him, please? --- Thank you.

Nick stands a moment at the phone, reflectively. Off in the distance the voice of a page boy can be heard.

PAGE BOY'S VOICE
Paging Mr. Burkett ... Paging Mr. Burkett ...

The boy comes into the scene as Nick still holds the phone.

PAGE BOY (cont'd)
Paging Mr. Burkett ...

Nick puts the receiver back on the hook, spins about and starts following the page boy, carefully.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

166

PAGE BOY
Paging Mr. Burkett ...
Paging Mr. Burkett ...

The boy advances toward swimming pool. Nick follows. Back of Nick, a huge voice booms out.

BURKETT
Right here, son.

167 MED. CLOSE SHOT - Nick as he moves slowly to look at his nemesis.

168 MED. CLOSE SHOT - Burkett, towering above him. He's dressed in bathrobe and is pretty impressive.

169 SHOT

BOY
Telephone for you. This way please ...

Burkett lightly vaults over a bar leading to the path. Nick watches, swallows ... As Burkett moves forward, two tourists ladies ogle him.

FIRST LADY
It is! It is!

SECOND LADY
I don't think so, Martha... I don't think so.

Nick approaches their table.

FIRST LADY
Young man --

NICK
Huh?

FIRST LADY
Isn't that Johnny Weismuller?

170 MED. CLOSE SHOT of Burkett as he tackles the telephone.

BURKETT
(booming)
Hello ... Hello ... There's nobody on this line, son ... But --
(takes his bathrobe off)
They'll call again.

He moves to the pool.

171 MED. CLOSE SHOT - of Nick, as he watches, fascinated apparently.

172 LONG SHOT - Burkett, beautifully built, ascends the lower diving board. He leaps from the diving board and catches the rings in mid-air.

rk

173 CLOSE SHOT - as the figure swirls through an intricate movement, every muscle showing.

174 MED. CLOSE SHOT - Nick, as his head moves from left to right with Burkett's movements.

175 MED. CLOSE SHOT - Burkett, as his chest expands to the breaking point.

176 MED. CLOSE SHOT - Nick, as he stares, horrified.

177 LONG SHOT - as Burkett completes a complicated maneuver.

178 LONG SHOT - as the spectators burst into spontaneous applause.

179 MED. CLOSE SHOT - as Nick feebly joins in applause.

180 LONG SHOT - figure still swinging.

DISSOLVE

INT. SHOE STORE - DAY

180a MED. SHOT - Ellen is seated trying on shoes - a meek littl man is fitting her - she is studying him thoughtfully. After a few looks - Ellen asks:

ELLEN
What do you do at lunch time?

LITTLE MAN
Have lunch.

ELLEN
Well, could you skip it today --
if I made it worth your while?

(CONTINUED)

LITTLE MAN
(looks around - then cautiously)
Yes.

ELLEN
(softly)
Meet me outside in front in fifteen minutes -- I'll explain the whole thing.

DISSOLVE

INT. NICK'S OFFICE - DAY

181 Nick is seated at his desk, examining a legal document. He stares down at it. The figure is swinging through a maze of "Whereases." He slams his hand down on the paper. His telephone rings. He reaches for it.

NICK
Hello. Oh, yes, Judge -- Well, it's my considered opinion that there's only one thing to do---

Figure begins swinging before his eyes.

NICK (cont'd)
Let me call you back.
(hangs up, picks up inner-office phone)
Miss Rosenthal, I'm not in to anyone. I'm in conference.
(hangs up)

He adopts the pose of Rodin's "Thinker." Now the figure starts swinging fast, faster, faster. Nick is obviously going crazy.

DISSOLVE

182 OMITTED

183 Figure moving very slowly, indicating Nick is exhausted. Buzzer buzzes. He picks it up.

NICK
(barks)
Yes... Who? Miss Wagstaff! Send her in.

Nick rises. Door opens and Ellen enters.

ELLEN
Hello... I hope I'm not interrupting anything important.

Nick merely glares at her.

ELLEN (cont'd)
I'm awfully sorry about last night, Nick -- really I am. I don't blame you for being suspicious. I should have told you.
(stops)
Have you a little time to spare?

NICK
Why?

ELLEN
Because I thought, if you did have a little time, you could see Mr. Burkett right now. I brought him. He's outside.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
(dumbfounded)
Bring him in.

ELLEN
(under her breath
as she starts for
the door)
We'll get this thing settled
right now!
(opens the door)
Stephen.

184 MED. CLOSE SHOT - of a little old man, who blinks, as he enters, he takes off yachting cap.

185 MED. SHOT - Ellen is between the two men.

ELLEN
Stephen, this is Nick.

186 MED. CLOSE SHOT - of Nick as he just stares from the old man to Ellen, who smiles at him.

NICK
So this is Mr. Burkett!

ELLEN
Uh-huh.

NICK
Adam!

Ellen
Uh-huh.

OLD MAN
This is a pleasure, Mr. Arden.
I've heard so much about you.

NICK
Sit down, Adam.

(CONTINUED)

OLD MAN
I really haven't very much time. I'm on my way to the Geographic Society for a very important meeting. I'm making a report of the flora and fauna we found on the island.

Nick nods.

OLD MAN (cont'd)
I was simply fascinated by the island vegetation. I'm afraid I spent so much time on research that I wasn't very good company for your wife.

NICK
We all wish we had our lives to live over again.

OLD MAN
Eh? Quite so... Quite so. Eve said you had some questions to ask me, Mr. Arden.

ELLEN
Yes. He has.
(to Nick)
Ask him. Ask him anything.

NICK
No... no questions, Mr. Burkett. No questions.

Ellen beams.

OLD MAN
(looking at Ellen)
Then I'll run along, shall I?

ELLEN
Must you?

OLD MAN
The Geographic Society insists on punctuality. Goodbye, Eve--

ELLEN
Goodbye.

(CONTINUED)

186 (CONTINUED)

OLD MAN
Goodbye, Mr. Arden.

NICK
Goodbye, old man.... Thanks for coming up. It was very enlightening.
(he looks at Ellen)

The old man exits.

ELLEN
(tweaking his nose)
Satisfied?

NICK
Uh-huh.
(he tweaks her nose)
I'm so satisfied, I'm going to take you to lunch... at the Pacific Club.

DISSOLVE

EXT. GARDEN - PACIFIC CLUB - DAY

187 Nick and Ellen are seated at table, ready for lunch. The waiter brings two cocktails.

ELLEN
(toasting her drink)
I'll tell you what - to no more suspicions! Faith and trust.

NICK
Faith -- and trust!

They drink.

ELLEN
If married people can't be frank, who can? After all!

NICK
Exactly!
(he looks up)

(CONTINUED)

Shall we order? I'm famished.
What are you staring at, darl ---

She stops midway, as voice back of her assails the air. Burkett and waiter walk into scene. Ellen's back is to Burkett.

BURKETT
No... not ready for lunch yet --
Need a few rip-ups to stimulate
the gastric juices!

He strides past, making his way to the diving board.

NICK
Isn't that Johnny Weismuller?

ELLEN
Who?

NICK
Oh, you've been away... You
wouldn't know... Picture star..
Tarzan! Beautiful body...
Beautiful man... Very strong..
Swings from limb to limb...
Cigarette?

He offers her case, lights it for her. Ellen takes one puff and puts it out.

NICK (cont'd)
...There he goes! Cigarette?

She takes cigarette, takes one puff and puts it out. Ellen studies Nick's face, turns slightly.

EXT. HIGH DIVING BOARD - PACIFIC CLUB - DAY

188 As Burkett poises, and does an exceedingly complicated dive, with a splash.

EXT. GARDEN - PACIFIC CLUB - DAY

189 Nick and Ellen seated at table.

NICK
Cigarette?
(he lights it)
Shall we order lunch? (CONTINUED)

189 (CONTINUED)

ELLEN
I'm not very hungry.
(she puts out
cigarette)

NICK
Thought you were famished.
Anything take your appetite
away?

ELLEN
The cocktail... I think.

NICK
Cocktails generally stimulate --
(with emphasis)
the gastric juices! There he
goes! Cigarette?

She taps the cigarette until the tobacco falls out.

EXT. HIGH DIVING BOARD - PACIFIC CLUB - DAY

190 As Burkett does still another dive.

EXT. GARDEN - PACIFIC CLUB - DAY

191 Nick and Ellen seated at table.

ELLEN
Exhibitionist!

NICK
Cigarette?

ELLEN
I don't smoke.

EXT. HIGH DIVING BOARD - PACIFIC CLUB - DAY

192 As Burkett puts his hand to shade his eyes. He thinks he sees Ellen.

EXT. GARDEN - PACIFIC CLUB - DAY

193 Nick and Ellen seated at table. Ellen bends down under table to avoid Burkett.

194 CLOSE SHOT - Of the two.

ELLEN
I dropped my gloves.

NICK
No, you didn't. They're on the table.
(he tweaks her nose)

ELLEN
That hurts!
(she moves her head up)

195 TWO SHOT - at table.

NICK
(indicating the gloves)
There they are!

ELLEN
Yes. So they are.
(sighs, tries to smile)

BURKETT'S VOICE
Hello, Eve.

From the water the head of Burkett emerges. He pulls himself up to the table, showing every muscle. Nick rises politely. Ellen swallows. Burkett shakes himself. A few drops fall on Nick. He brushes himself off.

BURKETT (cont'd)
Been doing a few nip-ups. I'm delighted to see you, Eve --

NICK
(elaborately)
Won't you -- present me?

ELLEN
Wh -- uh --

NICK
My name's Arden.. I didn't catch yours.

(CONTINUED)

BURKETT
(extending a wet hand)
Burkett's the name. Why, hasn't Eve --

NICK
(interrupting)
Burkett? Did you say -- Burkett?

BURKETT
I said Burkett.

NICK
(wiping his hand with napkin)
How very odd! ... Won't you lunch with us, Mr. Burkett?

BURKETT
Delighted ..
(pats his stomach)
The inner man is crying for nourishment.

NICK
Good! .. Waiter! ..

Waiter approaches. Burkett returns with his bathrobe.

NICK (cont'd)
We'll order now, Henri.

He looks at Ellen, who, not knowing what to do, suddenly begins to laugh. Nick glares.

HENRI
I recommend the squab en casserole, Mr. Arden. It is very delicious.

NICK
Ellen?

ELLEN
I just thought of that poor little old man I dragged up to your office --
(she chortles)

NICK
Squab?

She nods, still laughing.

NICK (cont'd)
(to Burkett)
Squab appeal to you? Or do you confine yourself to raw meat?

BURKETT
(smiling good-naturedly)
Never touch it. I'm strictly a vegetarian. Bring me a plate of raw carrots, a glass of milk, and some apples.

196 CLOSE SHOT - Henri, glaring at him.

HENRI
Yes, sir.

197 THREE SHOT.

NICK
I'll have filet mignon. We'll order the dessert later.

HENRI'S VOICE
Yes, sir.

BURKETT
Filet mignon. Man, you're undermining your natural inheritance. Accumulating poisons. That's all you're doing.

NICK
My health is excellent, thank you.

198 MED. SHOT - Burkett reaches out in one movement and lifts Nick out of his chair.

199 CLOSE SHOT - Nick's agonized face as he looks down at Ellen.

ff

200 CLOSE SHOT - Ellen, as she laughs.

201 The Group, as Burkett puts Nick down.

BURKETT
Now - Can you do that to me?

Ellen still laughs hysterically.

NICK
Mrs. Arden has a very profound sense of humor.

ELLEN
(choking)
I'm sorry, Nick -- but you looked so funny!

NICK
That was Mr. Burkett's idea.

BURKETT
You've got me wrong, old man. I was just showing you what a man can do on a diet of raw vegetables and fruits -- nature's own food.

NICK
Would you like a drink? Tiger's milk?

BURKETT
(grinning)
Now - don't be angry. I won't pick you up again.

NICK
Thank you.

202 CLOSER SHOT - there is a silence. Ellen looks at Nick warily. Nick looks off with what he hopes is a poker face. Burkett grins. Ellen looks at Burkett and grins, too. Nick smiles, bitterly.

ELLEN
My husband thinks we were not all we should have been on the island, and arranged this -- this - meeting to trap us into a confession.

NICK
(enraged)
Just a moment --

ELLEN
He's a very clever lawyer -- so beware! I'm going to be awfully foxy.

BURKETT
I've got nothing to hide.
(turns to Nick)
After all, it's up to you to decide which wife you want.

NICK
(looking furtively about)
What's that to you?

BURKETT
I'd like to marry Eve.

NICK
(enraged)
Oh, you would, would you?

BURKETT
The Lurline sails on Friday -- in exactly forty-eight hours. I want to finish the expedition that I started seven years ago, because I'm the kind of man who finishes what he starts. And I want Eve by my side.

203 CLOSE SHOT - Burkett, as he leans forward earnestly.

BURKETT
I've known your wife for seven years, and no man could ask for a better companion, a truer friend, or a more charming playmate.

204 CLOSER SHOT

ELLEN
Thank you, Adam.
(to Nick)
Isn't he impulsive?

205 CLOSE SHOT - Burkett.

BURKETT
If it's of any importance to you, I must in all fairness to your wife add that we have nothing to reproach ourselves for during those seven years.
(he takes up a carrot)

206 MED. CLOSE SHOT - the three.

NICK
You haven't!

BURKETT
(grinning)
So - just make up your mind, old man.

ELLEN
(rising - seriously)
In other words, Nick, if you don't want her, he wants her... Now if you gentlemen will excuse me -- Somehow I have the feeling I'm quite superfluous here. Nobody seems to think it's important to ask me what I want, or whom I want...
(almost on the verge of tears)
Just let me tell you this -- I don't care what either of you decide... I'm perfectly able to take care of myself.

206 (CONTINUED)

She turns about hastily and steps into the pool.

NICK
Ellen -- !

Nick seats himself and starts unlacing his shoes. Burkett plunges into pool to rescue Ellen, as a very disgusted Nick starts to put his shoes back on.

DISSOLVE

INT. BURKETT'S BEDROOM - DAY

207 MED. CLOSE SHOT - Ellen, Burkett and Nick. Ellen is in bed, sheet covering her.

ELLEN
And I was feeling so dignified -- so inwardly dramatic!

Nick looks at her.

BURKETT
(admiringly)
You did a perfect one and a half!

NICK
(glares at Stephen)
And you -- how about getting some clothes on.

BURKETT
(beaming)
I plumb forgot!
(to Ellen)
Be with you in a minute.

Nick stares at Ellen disapprovingly. Hotel valet enters.

VALET
(with service smile)
Valet?

(CONTINUED)

NICK
(picking up wet clothes)
Here you are.
(hands them to valet)

VALET
(in wonder)
It's been raining today, maybe?

NICK
Never mind that. Hurry along and get those clothes dried and pressed and so forth. Don't stand there!

VALET
To finish the articles you reqwast will take a few hours -- at least.

ELLEN
Oh, dear.

VALET
And the hat -- the hat is finished -- dead!

ELLEN
Poor hat! And it was so young -- so beautiful!

NICK
(to valet)
Step on it!

Valet disappears, utterly mystified and cowed.

ELLEN
(ruefully)
I'm afraid you'll have to go home and get me a change.

NICK
You'll want a dress and a hat.

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN
And shoes -- and stockings -- and underthings. Mother can assemble them.

Nick starts for the door talking.

NICK
If she's home.

ELLEN
Well, if she isn't -- just pick up any old things.

He opens the door just as Burkett lets himself in from the other room. He is fully dressed and most attractive.

BURKETT
Well, here I am! A different man!

ELLEN
(looks quickly at Burkett and then imploringly at Nick)
Nick, either come in or get out. But don't stand there.

NICK
(swallows; with a last look at Burkett)
I'll be right back.

He strides out, closes the door behind him.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

208 As he takes a few steps and stops. He suddenly remembers Burkett. He goes back. He stops at door, listens. Then he opens the door quickly, suddenly.

INT. BURKETT'S BEDROOM - DAY

209 MED. SHOT - Ellen, Burkett and Nick.

ELLEN
Back so soon?
(she smiles at him)

Nick sees Burkett sitting in a chair.

BURKETT
Forget something, old man?

NICK
Why -- uh -- how would you like to come along with me -- for the ride?

ELLEN
He'd love it!

BURKETT
(grinning at her)
Shall I order a cab?

NICK
Do you ride in cabs? Or do you just trot alongside?

Burkett laughs heartily.

DISSOLVE

INT. BIANCA'S BEDROOM - DAY

210 CLOSE SHOT - Table, with several books -- "Conquest of Timidity" ... "Marriage in One Volume" ... Hand is riffling the pages. CAMERA PULLS BACK to disclose Dr. Kohlmar, middle-aged, keen-eyed, bespectacled. Bianca is seated, nervously gulling.

DOCTOR
Continue ... I am listening.

(CONTINUED)

210 (CONTINUED)

BIANCA
Well, doctor, there isn't much more. Today --
(she stops)

DOCTOR
Yes, what happened today?

BIANCA
He didn't come home at all! He didn't call...

DOCTOR
Hmmm...

211 TWO SHOT - favoring Bianca.

BIANCA
(imploringly)
Doctor, what do you think it could be?

DOCTOR
There are hundreds such cases.

BIANCA
Really?

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR
It's not at all unusual.

BIANCA
But doctor, what am I going to do?

DOCTOR
Relax -- or you will be the patient, not your husband.

BIANCA
How can I - relax?

DOCTOR
For one thing -- I'd stop reading these books...

BIANCA
Oh!

DOCTOR
And, of course, it's important that I should talk to your husband. Most important. I suggest that you arrange that we meet socially. Then I can study him, unobserved -- and really help you.

BIANCA
Oh, doctor, I can't tell you how grateful I am to you... I'm a wreck...

DOCTOR
Now -- now -- calm yourself. This is going to take patience and understanding --
(looks at his watch)
Well, I must be going.

BIANCA
I'll go down with you, Doctor.

DOCTOR
No -- no -- it won't be necessary. I'll just get my hat.

Bianca opens corridor door and stops.

212 Nick is tiptoeing down the corridor, carrying a small suitcase. He's on his way to Ellen's room.

BIANCA
Nick!

Nick, realizing he's caught, turns slowly.

BIANCA (cont'd)
Nick, where have you been?
Where are you going?

NICK
Just getting some clothes for a friend of mine. He's downstairs in the car.

Doctor emerges from Bianca's bedroom. Nick stares at him.

BIANCA
Nick, this is Doctor Kohlmar. He's going to help us .. It's all right .. He knows ..

NICK
Huh?

BIANCA
There are hundreds such cases .. It's not at all unusual.

NICK
It's been a pleasure, Doctor, but if you'll excuse me, I'll get on with my packing ...

He moves forward and rounds the corridor.

BIANCA
You see, Doctor?

DOCTOR
(thoughtfully)
Hmmm ...

BIANCA
He just doesn't make sense. Sometimes I think I'm going mad - stark, staring mad!

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR
Now -- now -- not at all unusual. The mood and pose are characteristic of the frustrated individual. If I may make a suggestion --

BIANCA
(tremulously)
Yes, Doctor?

DOCTOR
You just rest...I'll wander in on your husband casually and -- talk things over.

BIANCA
Please, Doctor. I don't care what you do -- but please do something!

DOCTOR
There -- there --
(moves forward)

INT. ELLEN'S ROOM - DAY

213 Nick is fumbling with Ellen's clothes in closet. Finally he picks out a dress, and a hat. He sticks the hat on his head and puts the evening dress against him, as he stares into the mirror. He stares harder. The face of Doctor Kohlmar is visible. Nick turns.

NICK
Think it matches?

214 CLOSE SHOT - Doctor and Nick. Doctor nods gravely.

NICK
Blue goes with blue.

DOCTOR
Very becoming.

NICK
It's for a friend of mine.

DOCTOR
(gravely)
I see.

NICK
He's downstairs.

Doctor nods.

NICK (cont'd)
Girl he knows fell in the pool. He needs a complete change. So there you are.
(he picks up suitcase)

DOCTOR
I understand.

Nick exits into corridor, followed by Doctor.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

215 Nick dashes down the stairs. He is pursued by the doctor Every once in a while he looks back, like the little fox at the hunt and continues his dash for the front door. Bianca hears the disturbance, enters the corridor and follows down after them.

BIANCA
Nick!

NICK
(looking back)
I've got to go. Must rush!

BIANCA
Where are you going?

NICK
To the Supreme Court. Part three. Most important case in my career.
(rushes out the front door)

216 Burkett is pacing up and down the front of the house beside the cab. Nick comes rushing out the door, followed by the doctor and Bianca.

BIANCA
Nick. I'm sorry but I must ask you to stay.

NICK
Can't. I can't let my client down. It's a very grave charge. Extortion!

Burkett looks on dumbfounded.

BIANCA
I insist! I want to talk to you, Nick.

Burkett gets wind of the situation and starts to take the suitcase from Nick.

BURKETT
Look here, old man. I don't really need you. I'll defend myself.

NICK
(glaring at him; turns to Bianca)
Do you want me to lose my practice? Ruin my career?

BURKETT
Now, really old man, I'll be well taken care of.
(he firmly grabs the suitcase)
I'll take the law books.

BIANCA
Thank you. The fact is, I don't think Nick's at all well. I want Doctor Kohlmar to look him over.

BURKETT
Yes by all means -- He looks bad -- I think he should stay in bed.
(starts for the cab)

NICK
Wait a minute.

(CONTINUED)

BURKETT
Goodbye, old man.

NICK
(shouts after him)
You tell the Judge I'll be there in fifteen minutes!

BURKETT
I'll tell her.

The cab drives off. Nick looks after it, turns and starts for the house.

INT. HALLWAY - ARDEN HOME - DAY

217 Nick enters to Bianca and Dr. Kohlmar, who back away as he comes toward them.

NICK
Now what do you want? What do you both want? Can't a man come into his own home without being spied upon?

BIANCA
We're only trying to help you, Nick.
(very solicitously)
Don't you want to go upstairs and lie down?

Doctor nods gravely and takes his arm.

NICK
(brushing the doctor's arm off)
I don't want to lie down.
(he rises in hysteria)
I don't need a doctor. I've been trying to tell you --

BIANCA
(very gently)
Trying to tell me what, Nick?

NICK
I'm married!

(CONTINUED)

BIANCA
(she looks at doctor, who nods)
Of course you are.

NICK
I mean I was married when I married you.

BIANCA
I know that, darling.

NICK
I mean my wife's not dead. She didn't drown -- she fell in the pool. I was getting her some clothes.

Bianca looks at the doctor and the doctor nods and it is evident from their expressions that they are convinced Nick is crazy.

NICK (cont'd)
The fellow that was here -- he was on the island with her. They're at the Pacific Club and I've got to go there.

Back of Nick we see two policeman and a detective enter.

BIANCA
Yes, dear, I understand. Why don't you lie down?

NICK
(baffled)
She came to the hotel -- you know, the honeymoon -- ? That's why -- Well, for goodness sakes, isn't it clear to you? Do I have to draw a diagram?

BIANCA
You need a long rest, doesn't he, Doctor?

Doctor nods.

(CONTINUED)

DETECTIVE
Mr. Arden?

NICK
Go away.
(he turns to Bianca)
Don't you understand? My wife -- the mother of my children -- Ellen Wagstaff --

DETECTIVE
Mr. Arden?

NICK
(looks at policeman)
What do you --

DETECTIVE
Mr. Arden, I've got a warrant for your arrest.

NICK
Arrest? You can't arrest me. Is this Mr. Burkett's idea of a practical joke? What's the charge?

DETECTIVE
Bigamy.

NICK
Huh?

BIANCA
Bigamy?

DETECTIVE
(taking Nick's arm)
Do you mind coming with us, Mr. Arden?

The two policemen take Nick and start dragging him out. He looks back at Bianca and yells.

NICK
Now do you believe me?

As he is led away -

DISSOLVE OUT

DISSOLVE IN

INT. AUTOMOBILE - DAY - (PROCESS)

218 Nick is standing up in car, bored detective seated beside him, officer driving.

NICK
I don't care what the insurance company says. I'm a lawyer and I tell you this is the gravest miscarriage of justice --

DETECTIVE
(pulling him down)
Relax!

NICK
(struggling)
My first wife was declared legally dead by Judge Walter Bryson in Supreme Court Part Three on the 23rd of October at 11:15 A.M.

DETECTIVE
Relax!

NICK
Why don't you take me to Judge Bryson?

DETECTIVE
We will, eventually.

NICK
Look here -- will you stop at the Pacific Club?

DETECTIVE
What for? Want to take a swim?

NICK
I've got to pick up two important witnesses. They'll bear me out! Only I've got to pick them up right away before -- before --

DETECTIVE
Before what?

(CONTINUED)

NICK
Before I do anything else.

DETECTIVE
All right. We'll get your witnesses.

NICK
Well, that helps a little.

DISSOLVE

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

219 With Bianca, Ellen, Nick and Burkett at the Judge's bench.

NICK
(as the Judge is banging the gavel)
If Your Honor please, all I'm trying to say is --

JUDGE
Quiet!
(he rustles the brief)
What are you doing here, anyway? Bigamy is a criminal offense. This is a civil court. What kind of a lawyer are you? What school did you go to?

NICK
Harvard.

JUDGE
I'm a Yale man myself.
(looks at Bianca)
Are you the bride?

BIANCA
Yes.

JUDGE
Kissless? It's an annulment.

NICK
If Your Honor please --

(turning to
the clerk)
Harvard man.

(rustling the
pages of the
brief)
I see nothing wrong with my decision. You presented this brief. All the evidence is here.

(he rustles
over the
pages)
Teething. What do you want me to do -- reverse myself? Go to the Court of Appeals. They're always reversing me anyway.

NICK
Your Honor, I have a precedent for this case. I cite Mulligan versus Mulligan-Benson in the City of Fresno, 1879. You're familiar with the case, Your Honor?

JUDGE
I tried it.

NICK
Mulligan versus Mulligan-Benson, in the City of Fresno, 1879.

BIANCA
Your Honor, how long do I have to stay here and listen to this worm?

NICK
Now just a moment, Bianca.

ELLEN
Go on, Nick, tell us what happened, in Mulligan versus Mulligan-Benson.

NICK
Well, Mrs. Mulligan, the first wife returned after an absence of considerable length to find that her husband, Mr. Mulligan, had remarried. But Mrs. Mulligan-Benson, or rather Mrs. Benson-Mulligan, the second wife --

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN
It was a sort of Mulligan stew.
(she laughs)

JUDGE
Quiet! I'll have no laughter in this courtroom. There's such a thing as contempt of court.

NICK
If you please, Your Honor --
(he stops)
What was I saying?

ELLEN
You were up to the second wife.
(she indicates Bianca)

JUDGE
I warned you once, I'll have no more interruptions.
(he turns to Nick)
Didn't they teach you at Harvard to present your facts in a logical and orderly manner?

NICK
I'm trying to, Your Honor. May I proceed?

JUDGE
I should have adjourned court half an hour ago.

NICK
When Mrs. Mulligan returned, Mrs. Mulligan, the second wife, immediately sued for annulment, which left Mr. Mulligan free to remarry, either Mrs. Mulligan, the first wife, or Mrs. Mulligan-Benson, the second wife.

JUDGE
Well, don't stand there gawking. What did he do?

NICK
Well, the case was rather complicated.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE
How?

NICK
Shortly after the annulment, Mr. Mulligan dropped dead of cirrhosis of the liver.

ELLEN
(laughing)
And they never did find out whether he slept with his beard under the covers or over the covers.

JUDGE
(bangs the gavel)
That's going to cost you twenty-five dollars.

ELLEN
Just for a nice old joke?

JUDGE
You heard me -- twenty-five dollars.

ELLEN
But Your Honor, I'm legally dead. Do you think it's nice to take money from a corpse?

JUDGE
That'll cost you twenty-five more.

NICK
But Your Honor, she is legally dead. You declared her legally dead in this very courtroom. Your decision is on file.

JUDGE
(turns to the clerk)
Did I do that?

Clerk nods.

JUDGE (cont'd)
Well, I'm going to declare her legally alive, right now. Will someone swear she's a live woman?

BURKETT
I will, Your Honor.

NICK
You can't do that, Your Honor. If she's legally alive, I'm guilty of bigamy.

JUDGE
(to the clerk)
Can you make this case out?

Burkett suddenly begins to laugh. He's gotten the joke.

BURKETT
Mulligan stew! Boy, that's a good one!

JUDGE
(staring at Burkett)
Who are you?

NICK
Oh -- uh -- he was with my wife on the island. He's not important in this case.

JUDGE
I'll decide what's important in this case. What island?

NICK
Oh, the island where my wife's been staying for the last seven years.

JUDGE
They were on the island together for seven years? Is that in the brief?
(rustles the papers)

NICK
No, Your Honor.

The Judge turns to the clerk and whispers into his ear, indicating Burkett and Ellen. Clerk laughs. Nick winces.

NICK (cont'd)
If Your Honor please --

BIANCA
I want to get out of here before I explode.

JUDGE
I should be home myself. I'd like to tell my wife about this case. She thinks most of my cases are dull.

NICK
If Your Honor please --

JUDGE
Well, it seems to me what I should do is to annul the second marriage and then you can marry this woman.
(looks at Burkett)
I don't know what you're going to do about him.

NICK
Well, I haven't had time to think that out, Your Honor.

Ellen reacts.

BIANCA
Your Honor, I just want to tell you what this man has done to me from the moment he married me.

As her voice continues, Burkett takes Ellen's arm to indicate he wants to see her off-scene.

BIANCA (cont'd)
If he'd only come to me and told me --

(CONTINUED)

CAMERA FOLLOWS Burkett and Ellen as Nick's voice comes over.

NICK'S VOICE
Wait a minute, Bianca, I did try to tell you, only, you see --

INT. CHAMBERS - DAY

220 By this time Burkett and Ellen are in the interior chamber.

BURKETT
He hasn't had time to think it over!

ELLEN
Poor Nick.

BURKETT
Ellen, I'm the kind of man who finishes what he starts. I'm going back to the island. I want you to come with me.

ELLEN
Thank you, Adam, but I haven't waited seven years just to give up in three days.

BURKETT
What's the matter? Am I too vital for you?

ELLEN
Yes, Adam, I guess that's it.

BURKETT
You're just being loyal.
(he stops)
And I respect you for your loyalty.

ELLEN
Adam, would you do one thing for me? I know I shouldn't ask you --

(CONTINUED)

BURKETT
Anything.

ELLEN
I've got to get him back. Will you help me?

BURKETT
Sure. How?

ELLEN
Just repeat that invitation in front of Nick.

Bianca's voice is heard screaming. Ellen and Burkett start.

BURKETT
What's that?

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

221-241 As Burkett and Ellen enter, we see Bianca throwing a sum of money down on the bench.

JUDGE
I won't have violence in my courtroom!

BIANCA
Twenty-five dollars and it was worth it!

As Nick, who is bent over, straightens himself up, we see he has a handkerchief to his nose. He is talking through it but we can't hear the words.

BIANCA (cont'd)
And all I've got to say to you is that as far as I'm concerned you're legally dead.
(she exits)

BURKETT
Well, Ellen --
(simulating his act)
See you at the boat at nine o'clock.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE
Quiet. What boat?

BURKETT
We're not interested in man-made laws. There's a law of the jungle. When a man finds his mate, he doesn't have to think it out. Goodbye, Eve, until tomorrow.

ELLEN
Goodbye, Adam.

JUDGE
Just a moment.

BURKETT
And it's all right with me if you bring the kiddies!
(he exits)

JUDGE
In all my experience on the bench —
(he picks up the brief)
I want to study this brief. I will then render a decision.

NICK
(through his handkerchief)
Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE
Quiet!

ELLEN
No matter what he decides I'm going to get a divorce.

JUDGE
Quiet!

(CONTINUED)

NICK
(whispering, as he removes the handkerchief, holds his head to the side)
If you think I'm going to let you take the kids to a fever-ridden pesthole with that idiot --

ELLEN
(looking at him)
Hold your head way back.

She takes the handkerchief from him, goes to the Judge's desk, takes the water bottle which is there and pours some cold water over the handkerchief. The Judge looks at her annoyed but says nothing. Ellen, as she gets back to Nick, applies the handkerchief to his nose.

ELLEN (cont'd)
Well, what's your offer?
(as she holds the handkerchief on his nose)

NICK
Well, I thought you might go up to the mountain house with the kids for awhile until the gossip dies down.

ELLEN
Hold your head way back.

NICK
And I thought I'd go off on one of those sixty-day cruises to think this out calmly -- rationally.

ELLEN
And when you came back you might forgive me for not drowning?

NICK
No, it isn't that --

ELLEN
Well, I'll think it over, too, calmly -- rationally -- only I don't need sixty days. I can do it in sixty minutes.

(CONTINUED)

Nick's nose begins bothering him again.

NICK
Oh!

ELLEN
Put your head back -- way, way back.

Nick is against the Judge's bench. As his head falls back, it clunks against the water bottle which falls over and the water splashes over the brief and the Judge. The Judge leaps up.

JUDGE
(holding the soggy brief)
How do you expect me to read a wet brief? Court's adjourned!
(glares at Nick)
Harvard man!

DISSOLVE

EXT. ARDEN GARAGEWAY - DAY

242 Ellen bundles Chinch and Timmy into the car. Mother and Phillip help with the suitcases and the bundles.

ELLEN
Now in you go.

MA
Here's a blanket if you get cold.

ELLEN
Be careful of that thermos bottle, Timmy.

MA
See that Chinch wears her sweater at night...she catches cold easily.

INT. NICK'S ROOM - DAY

243 Nick stands at a bay-window overlooking the garageway. He sees Ellen and the children preparing to leave. He paces nervously. There is a sound of the car motor starting. Ellen and the children can be seen waving goodbye to Ma. There it is. Ellen and the children walking out on him. Is he still going to be a stuffed shirt? Determinedly, Nick makes up his mind, dashes for his closet, grebs a coat, and starts to reach for something.

EXT. ARDEN HOUSE - DAY

244 LONG SHOT - the car starts down the garageway and just about reaches the front when Nick dashes out of the front door and runs towards it.

245 MED. SHOT.

NICK
Wait a minute --

Ellen stops the car as Nick runs beside the car.

ELLEN
Yes?

NICK
(breathless)
You can't drive that car.

ELLEN
I've been practicing on it all morning. It's a lot easier than that blunderbus we used to have.

NICK
You haven't got a license!... Do you think I want my wife arrested? My kids picked up?

ELLEN
Very well, then, I'll get a driver.

NICK
That won't be necessary... Get in...I'll drive you.

ELLEN
(smiling to herself)
I'd rather you didn't.
(as she gets into car)

(CONTINUED)

NICK
(as he gets behind the wheel)
Nevertheless, I'll drive you.
(stops -- defiantly)
Where to?

ELLEN
We're going to the mountains!

NICK
(suspiciously)
The mountains?

ELLEN
Yes, the mountains.

NICK
Oh!

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - EVENING

246 Car rolling up to mountain house. It stops. Ellen gets out, Nick follows.

ELLEN
(as she opens the door; to Nick)
Thank you very much.

NICK
That's all right.

She opens the door for the children.

247 At car.

ELLEN
Come on, children.
(she stares at Chinch who's asleep)
Chinch...

TIMMY
If she's not eating, she's sleeping!

247 (CONTINUED)

ELLEN
(picking her up in her arms)
Up you go --

NICK
I'll take her.

ELLEN
Oh, no...We've got to learn to take care of ourselves while you're off on your vacation --
(she exits to house)
-- thinking.

NICK
I'll take the suitcases.

ELLEN
(from door)
If you insist.

248 TRUCKING SHOT - as Timmy and Nick walk.

TIMMY
Are you going off on a vacation, Daddy?

NICK
That's right.

TIMMY
Are you going to Yosemite Falls again?

NICK
No!

TIMMY
You're not going to get married again, are you?

NICK
No!!

TIMMY
You don't have to get sore. I was just asking.

INT. HALLWAY - EVENING

249 As Ellen meets him.

ELLEN
You can leave them right there, thank you. Now you run along and wash up, Timmy...and we'll have some dinner as soon as Chinch has her nap.

TIMMY
She'll wake up for dinner.
(exits into house)

ELLEN
(turns to Nick)
Well, good-bye.

NICK
Good-bye...It'll be sort of dark going down the mountains on those hairpin turns.

ELLEN
But you're such a good driver.

NICK
Oh, I'm not worried about that.. I don't think there's much fog.

ELLEN
There isn't any.

NICK
Nice night.

ELLEN
Yes...lovely... Well, good-bye. You'll just have time to make your cruise.

NICK
(turning shortly)
Good-bye.

She closes the door.

250 As Nick steps into the car, thoughtfully.

251 As he steps on the starter, he doesn't turn the key. The starter whines. It whines some more. And more. He looks to see the effect. He keeps up the whining. Finally, the door opens.

252 MED. CLOSE SHOT - Ellen at the door.

ELLEN
Anything wrong?

NICK
Won't start!

ELLEN
(moving to car)
Oh, that's too bad.

NICK
Must be the battery... Guess it's finished.

ELLEN
You sure you turned the key?

NICK
(whose hand covers it)
Ignition? Oh, certainly...

She keeps staring.

NICK (cont'd)
See? No matter what you do --
(he fumbles, car starts)

ELLEN
There it is!

NICK
Works!...

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN
That's wonderful...Well, good-bye.

NICK
Good-bye.

She moves to the house.

NICK (cont'd)
I could have coasted down.

ELLEN
Easily.

NICK
But I don't have to now.

ELLEN
Isn't that a comfort? Well, good-bye.

NICK
Good-bye...Oh, I forgot.

ELLEN
Yes?

NICK
When are you going to tell them that you're their -- you know --

ELLEN
I don't know...It may be a little difficult. I won't try for a little while. I'm afraid.

NICK
Yes. Don't want to shock them... At their age, the mind is a pretty sensitive instrument... We don't know what it's about when we're that young.

ELLEN
But we do know when we grow up, don't we?

NICK
(swallowing it)
Sure...with maturity, the mind can stand anything.
(he stops)
Practically anything. Good-bye

Nick turns to the wheel.

ELLEN
Good-bye!

She turns and goes back up on the porch - turns - looks back toward Nick. Nick backs the car in driveway. Ellen calls from porch.

ELLEN
Oh! You're really going?

Nick pulls car back in - the motor making so much noise he can't hear her - he calls to her:

NICK
What'd you say?

Ellen, very dryly, yells back over sound of motor:

ELLEN
GOOD-BYE!

Nick yells back in the same manner:

NICK
GOOD-BYE!

And he backs the car up the driveway again. Ellen turns and goes across the porch and on into the house through the open door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ARDEN MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT

253 Ellen closes the door after her and pauses before the window - looking out after Nick, as the sound of his car is heard going off down the road.

253a Timmy and Chinch are seated on the floor before the fireplace, looking at some funny papers spread on the floor around them, they are both looking off toward Ellen.

253b Chinch reaches over and takes ahold of Timmy and in a low voice questions him.

CHINCH
If she's our mother, what's Daddy?

TIMMY
Our father.

CHINCH
Are you sure?

TIMMY
Sure. What else could he be?

CHINCH
I don't know. Nobody ever tells me anything.

They look off toward Ellen.

253c Ellen turns from the window, smiles as she sees the children, crosses, removing her coat, tossing it onto a chair, CAMERA PANNING WITH HER to Chinch and Timmy.

ELLEN
What are you two little monkeys talking about?

CHINCH
Nothing.

TIMMY
Nothing -- nothing at all.

Ellen moves on to fireplace - looks around the room and then to the children.

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN
Oh, I love this place -- I used to come up here all the time.

TIMMY
With our mother?

Ellen turns her head quickly toward the children - pauses a moment - almost tempted to tell them who she is now - but weakens and says weakly:

ELLEN
Uh huh -- and you're Daddy -- we used to have a lot of fun.

TIMMY
The three of you?

Timmy and Chinch exchange a look. Ellen has looked away - now she looks back at them - again tempted to break the news - but she can't quite steel herself to do it now.

ELLEN
Well -- uh huh --
(she bends over to them)
What do you want for your dinner?

CHINCH
Was our mother a good cook?

Ellen straightens up.

ELLEN
Yes -- she was sorta good -- your Daddy always liked her cooking --
(again she evades the issue, changing the subject)
I'll just fix you something light.

And she moves away from the fireplace, starting toward the dining corner. Timmy and Chinch exchange looks -- and as Timmy calls to stop Ellen -- he rises.

(CONTINUED)

TIMMY
Oh, by the way --

Ellen stops - turns toward the children. Timmy stands removing his coat sweater as he talks.

TIMMY (cont'd)
-- was our mother good-lookin'?

Ellen reacts and then starts to try to answer Timmy.

ELLEN
Well, most people -- uh, that is, some people thought -- Oh, I don't know --

The children exchange looks and nod during Ellen's stalling answer - then Timmy goes on, as he stands folding up his sweater.

TIMMY
Well, I just thought I'd ask -- you see, we don't know very much about her.

And he throws his sweater onto the divan.

ELLEN
Listen --
(she sits - as she makes up her mind she will now tell the children who she is)
-- suppose your mother didn't drown -- suppose she came back --?

TIMMY
You mean like a miracle?

ELLEN
Uh huh -- suppose she were right here in this --

At this point Chinch can no longer control herself and she giggles, Timmy gives her a look and gestures for her to keep still. Ellen reacts -- realizes now that they already know -- rises --

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN (cont'd)
Look here -- you know, don't you?

TIMMY
Sure --

Chinch nods -- rises to her feet -- they both stand looking to Ellen, very embarrassed now. Ellen is also at a loss for the moment.

ELLEN
Well --

Timmy steps up to her, holds out his hand, Ellen shakes hands with him.

TIMMY
How do you do, Mother.

ELLEN
How do you do.

Timmy steps back beside Chinch. Chinch curtsies.

CHINCH
How do you do.

Ellen stands looking at the children, tears in her eyes.

ELLEN
Well, don't you think it's about time somebody ought to start kissing somebody?

Timmy, embarrassed, gestures with head for Chinch to be the one. Chinch moves to Ellen. Ellen sits, taking hold of Chinch, kisses her and then draws her onto her lap and holds her close.

ELLEN (cont'd)
Oh Chinch -- oh darling -- darling --

Timmy stands turned away, but glances back over his shoulder at them, then turns and goes to them. Timmy throws his arms about Ellen and she puts one arm about him -- they kiss.

ELLEN
Timmy!

She holds them both close and we can hear her saying --

ELLEN (cont'd)
How did you find out -- go on tell me -- come on --

Just then the door is heard to open and they all look off toward it.

Nick has just entered, his coat collar still turned up, he looks toward Ellen and the children:

NICK
I had a flat!

He closes the door behind him.

The children and Ellen get to their feet as they all speak:

TIMMY-CHINCH-ELLEN
Daddy! Hello, Dad! Hello!

Nick, at door - explains:

NICK
I was going along -- and --
(gestures with noise)
-- p-sssssst -- the air went right out of the tire.

Ellen throws him a look - then she starts ushering the children toward the stairs.

ELLEN
Come on, children -- upstairs --

TIMMY
Why?

ELLEN
You've got to mind me now, you know.

TIMMY
Oh yeah -- I forgot.

And as Chinch, followed by Timmy, starts up the stairs, Ellen calls after them, CAMERA PANNING ON the children.

ELLEN'S VOICE
Go on -- wash up -- I'll call you when dinner's ready.

Chinch and Timmy stop on landing and call down to Nick over railing.

CHINCH
Why don't you stay for dinner, Daddy?

Nick looks from the children to Ellen, hopefully.

TIMMY
Yeah, then we can all try out Mother's cooking.

With a gesture of his thumb toward Ellen, laughing - Chinch and Timmy run on up the stairs out of scene.

Nick reacts to this information and runs to Ellen.

NICK
You told them -- huh?

ELLEN
Uh huh.

NICK
Oh that's great -- you know I was wondering --

Ellen looks him in the eye and pulls him back to his explanation and excuses for coming back.

ELLEN
What about the spare tires?

253c (CONTINUED)

NICK
Huh --
(stalling)
-- no air in 'em!

ELLEN
Do you want to phone the garage?

NICK
Can't -- the wires are down --
and you see there's been a
landslide. The road is blocked --
probably won't be able to use the
phone until morning.

The telephone rings at this moment. Ellen and Nick both look toward the phone -- Ellen looks back at Nick.

NICK (cont'd)
Fixed.

Ellen gives him a little look and then crosses to the telephone - picks it up and answers it.

ELLEN
(into phone)
Hello.

INT. LOWER HALLWAY - ARDEN HOME - NIGHT

253d CLOSE SHOT - Ma at the telephone.

MA
(into phone)
Ellen, I have some good news
for you.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ARDEN MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT

253e CLOSE SHOT - Ellen at the telephone.

ELLEN
(into phone)
Yes?

INT. LOWER HALLWAY - ARDEN HOME - NIGHT

253f CLOSE SHOT - Ma at the telephone.

MA
(into phone)
There was a call from Judge Bryson's office. They said that Nicky's annulment has been filed and that you've been declared legally alive and you owe him fifty dollars.
(pause)
So you and Nick are husband and wife again and you can just pick up where you left off. How does it feel to be alive, darling?

INT. LIVING ROOM - ARDEN MOUNTAIN HOUSE- NIGHT

253g FULL SHOT - Ellen at the telephone.

ELLEN
(into phone)
Wonderful -- goodbye!

Ellen hangs up the receiver. Nick, watching, very uncomfortable, inquires:

NICK
Who was that?

ELLEN
They just phoned to say, the road is open.

She puts the phone down on the end table, and starts crossing toward dining corner. Nick stands watching her -- now openly fencing with her -- as he tries to think up new excuses for remaining.

NICK
Oh, well, it's no use. I'm out of gas.

He crosses toward Ellen. Ellen at the sideboard, has picked up plates and as she moves to the table with them.

(CONTINUED)

ac

ELLEN
You seem to be out of everything but ideas.

She starts placing the plates on the table. Nick stands near the railing of stairway.

NICK
(persuasively)
May I stay?

Ellen still setting the table.

ELLEN
Sure -- you can stay for dinner.

She finishes placing the plates on the table.

NICK
Thanks -- I always sleep well up here.

ELLEN
Let's see -- I wonder where -- the children have their room, and
(has picked up thermos bottle from table)
-- our room becomes my room -- looks like you draw the attic.

NICK
Attic!

ELLEN
It's perfect for thinking things out.

And she exits toward the kitchen. Nick stands alone, perplexed, hand to chin - his eyes go up toward the attic --

DISSOLVE OUT

DISSOLVE IN

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

254 Nick is slipping on the coat of his pajamas. He suddenly whirls as something scrapes his neck. He discovers it's whiskers and CAMERA MOVES to Santa Claus suit, Xmas tree decorations, ski suits and other paraphernalia generally found in a storeroom. He climbs into the bed. It creaks viciously, and a spring does something to his back. Finally he sits up. His mind is made up. He starts climbing down the stairs.

INT. LANDING - NIGHT

255 As he slides down the last two steps, stops to nurse a bruised toe. He makes his way to Ellen's bedroom, knocks.

INT. ELLEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

256

ELLEN
Yes?

Door opens.

ELLEN (cont'd)
What's wrong?

NICK
(still trying)
Are you hungry?

ELLEN
No. Are you?

NICK
No -- I thought maybe you were hungry.

ELLEN
No, I'm not.

NICK
Well, then, good night --

She turns out the light before he exits. He closes the door and snaps his fingers, disgustedly.

INT. DOOR - NIGHT

257 As he stops. Then he makes his way to attic stairs.

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

258 He gets into bed. He springs up -- for the spring has got him this time. Now he fishes around and comes up with a fat brown legal envelope that was in his coat. He makes his way back again.

INT. ELLEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

259 As Nick knocks. No answer. He opens the door carefully.

INT. ELLEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

260 MED. CLOSE SHOT - of Ellen watching him. She feigns a cry of fright. She puts up the light.

NICK
Oh -- I'm sorry, I didn't mean to frighten you.

ELLEN
What do you want?

NICK
(feeling his back)
Terrible couch up there.

ELLEN
Now you know how your guests feel.

NICK
(he looks at the empty twin bed)
I'll have it thrown out in the morning.. Are you comfortable?

ELLEN
Very.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
You look comfortable.

ELLEN
Thank you.

NICK
You look -- beautiful.

ELLEN
Thank you.

NICK
Do I have to go back to that torture rack up there?
(squirms)

ELLEN
Yes -- you have to go back.

NICK
(moving to her)
Oh, what's the use, Ellen? You know the way I feel ... I can think from now to Doomsday. I'm stuck. I don't care what happened. I don't care what people say. I was always mad about you, and always will be.

ELLEN
(drawing the covers up over her; sitting up primly)
Why, Mr. Arden ... You haven't had time to think this out - - calmly, rationally.

NICK
I don't have to think it out.

ELLEN
No, you go on your cruise ---

NICK
I'm not going to stay away from you sixty days ---

260 (CONTINUED)

ELLEN
(counts)
Sixty days .. Now let me see .. December .. twenty-three .. twenty-four .. Just about Xmas time. I'm sorry Nick, but you'll just have to come back and tell me about it in sixty days. We'll have a lovely Xmas.

NICK
Aw!

ELLEN
That's what Timmy always says -- Aw .. But you'll just have to wait, Nick. Good night.

NICK
(shortly)
Good night.
(he slams the door.

CAMERA REMAINS on Ellen. She is smiling. Then she moves to turn off the light. Darkness.

DISSOLVE

(TAG TO BE WRITTEN)

FADE OUT

THE END